

HAIGHT

A new musical

By David Wendell Nelson

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Aaron Thomas - 22 year old male Caucasian guitarist, tenor

Jing Po - 21 year old Chinese female, alto

Ramon Ochoa - 25 year old male Mexican guitarist, tenor

David Fiske - African-American male bassist, baritone, 22 years old

Paul Escobar - male drummer of Mexican heritage, 24 years old, baritone

Scott Morgan - male keyboardist, Caucasian, 21 years old, tenor

Ling-si Po - 24 year old Chinese female, older sister of Jing, alto

Old Ling-si Po - (narrator) present day Ling-si. In her 60s. Chinese female. Speaking only.

Mr. Po - Jing's Chinese father, baritone

Mrs. Po - Jing's Chinese mother, alto

Yao - landlord of the Po apartment, Chinese and 35 years old, baritone

Portsmouth Square Rally Host - Chinese emcee for the Portsmouth Square rally, female, speaking only

Register girl - Chinese, about 30 years old. Ling-si's daughter, speaking only

Golden Gate rally host - Chinese male, speaking only

John Clark - Asian/White, about 35 years old. Aaron's son. Baritone

Sabrina Clark - John's wife, 30 year old caucasian. Alto

Nick - African-American male. Guard at prison. Speaking only.

The Reverend Marshall Logan - Inspirational African-American anti-war speaker, similar to Martin Luther King. Speaking only.

George Hoffman-Portsmouth Square Rally speaker. Older white male. Speaking only.

Coffee Shop Waitress - young white female. Speaking only.

Lawyer - Caucasian, 40s, pony tail. Speaking only.

Mrs. Lee - older Chinese female at food booth at the night fair. Speaking only.

Cal Reporter - young female. Speaking only.

Student No. 1-young Chinese male or female. Speaking only.

Student No. 2-young Chinese male or female. Speaking only.

Student No. 3-young Chinese male or female. Speaking only.

Student No. 4-young Chinese male or female. Speaking only.

Booth attendant - older Chinese male at the night fair. Non-speaking

Security guards - 3 male security guards. Non-speaking.

SETTINGS

Scene 1: The Presidio Cemetery in San Francisco in 1970, lawyer's office present day

Scene 2: Aaron's Haight-Ashbury apartment in 1970, lawyer's office present day, the Po family Chinatown apartment and shop in 1970 San Francisco

Scene 3: John and Sabrina's computer room in their home, present day

Scene 4: Coffee shop in Haight-Ashbury 1970

Scene 5: Po family apartment and shop in 1970

Scene 6: San Francisco's Portsmouth Square in 1970

Scene 7: Sproul Plaza at UC Berkeley in 1970

Scene 8: John and Sabrina's computer room in their home, present day

Scene 9: San Francisco's Portsmouth Square anti-war rally in 1970

Scene 10: Po family shop and apartment in 1970

Scene 11: Po family apartment and shop in 1970

Scene 12: San Francisco's Portsmouth Square in 1970

Scene 13: San Francisco Public Library, present day

Scene 14: San Francisco's Chinatown streets and clinic in 1970

Scene 15: Aaron's prison cell, Po family apartment and shop in 1970

Scene 16: Aaron's prison cell in 1970

Scene 17: Aaron's prison cell in 1971, Po family apartment and shop in 1971

Scene 18: Po family shop in 1971

Scene 19: Aaron's prison cell in 1971

Scene 20: Po family shop in 1971

Scene 21: Po family shop in 1971

Scene 22: Aaron's prison cell in 1971, Po family shop in 1970, Aaron's apartment in 1971

Scene 23: Po family shop in 1971

Scene 24: Po family shop in 1971

Scene 25: Golden Gate Park, San Francisco in April of 1971

PRODUCTION NOTES

The story takes place in 1970/1971 with flash forwards to the present day. The location is Chinatown and the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco California.

The set design for Haight can range from simple to complex, depending on budget, time, and space. Generally speaking, there are two elements on stage most of the time: Aaron's Haight-Ashbury apartment stage right and the Po family apartment and shop stage left. The Po family shop and apartment have multiple elements. The shop is at stage level with apartment above, including the bedrooms for both Jing and Ling-si. Above the apartment is the roof. Of course, these three elements can be modified as needed.

Aaron's apartment will change into other elements as well: Aaron's jail cell, the coffee shop.

The night fair occupies the entire stage with Aaron's apartment and the Po family shop removed. The stage is covered with booths.

The lawyer's office scenes require no special staging, simply a desk and chairs anywhere on stage.

The Portsmouth Square rally will also occupy the entire stage. There is a small stage for the band and rally speaker.

The Golden Gate Park rally requires the same arrangement as the Portsmouth Square rally.

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For Cindy, my Jing

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SCENE 1

Present day. Stage is dark and empty. Play “CUE 1-ANTHEM QUOTE”. After the cue finishes proceed with a loud rimshot. A solo spot brightly illuminates OLD LING-SI PO standing at the front of center stage. SHE bows and looks out at the audience, attempting to see their faces. SHE slowly begins to smile ruefully and starts to address the audience.

OLD LING-SI

Hello. I'm so glad you're here. There's something I'd like to say. It's a story actually. About my family, especially my sister. It's a story that needs to be told for a variety of reasons, as you will soon see. Suffice to say, it is a lesson for all of us.

The media screen above the stage begins to show images of JING. OLD LING-SI turns towards the media screen behind her and points at it.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

That's right. That's her. Her name is Jing.

OLD LING-SI turns back towards the audience. Play “CUE 2-GUZHENG BACKGROUND” as she speaks.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I always wondered about my little sister and what the real story was. For years I never had a complete picture, only a perplexing mosaic of events and conversations. Until now. As if by some divine guidance, the complete chronicle came to me in the form of old friends, new acquaintances, and random chance. I have always felt that all this happened, at least in part, because of me. My friends and family reassure me that I'm mistaken, but I feel I failed somehow. Of course, this explains, at least in some small way, why I want to relay this amazing story. I do it for myself, my sister, and my family. It is a story of family, the high cost of xenophobia, and the search for the truth. But above all, it is a story of love.

The media screen now begins to show images of 1970 San Francisco, Chinatown, civil rights marches, hippies, rock and roll icons, marijuana, Timothy Leary, Mario Savio, and antiwar protests. OLD LING-SI again turns towards the media screen and points.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

Ah yes. San Francisco in the late 60s and early 70s. I'm sure some of you remember those days. It was an amazing time to be alive. Everything seemed different then. In less than ten years a maelstrom of change took America by storm. But I consider myself fortunate to have been a part of it. So let's begin with something that happened just last week. Oh yes, my name is Ling-si Po.

OLD LING-SI bows to the audience. The media screen goes dark as the solo spot on OLD LING-SI abruptly disappears with another rimshot. SHE leaves the stage. STUDENTS No. 1 and No. 2 bring a gravestone onto the stage. A solo spot light slowly comes up on JOHN standing quietly alone in front of the gravestone. HE is dressed in a black suit and obviously distraught. He carries a single rose in his hand. After a few moments SABRINA, his wife, enters the stage slowly and joins JOHN in the solo spot. SHE puts her arms on HIS shoulders. SHE wears a black dress. JOHN and SABRINA sing "CUE 3-GRAVESIDE".

SABRINA

I'M SO SORRY MY DEAR
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
TRY TO REMEMBER THE LOVE
THAT NEVER GOES AWAY

JOHN

I KNOW THINGS MUST CHANGE
THEY CAN'T STAY THE SAME
BUT I STILL WISH IT WAS YESTERDAY

JOHN slowly approaches the grave, kneels down, and places the rose on the gravestone. HE then stands and slowly backs away.

SABRINA

I THINK WE BETTER GO
WE DON'T WANT TO BE LATE

JOHN

I NEVER GOT TO SAY GOODBYE
FOREVER IS A LONG TIME TO WAIT
FOR ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE
I'M A GRATEFUL SON
BUT THERE'S THIS FEELING
THAT I JUST CAN'T SHAKE

*JOHN has trouble bringing himself to leave.
SABRINA gently takes him by the arm.
STUDENTS No. 1 and No.2 quickly come
onstage and remove the gravestone.
STUDENTS No. 3 and No. 4 quickly bring
on a desk and three chairs.*

SABRINA

(tenderly)

Come on.

*The spot fades as SABRINA and JOHN walk
together arm in arm to the other side of the
stage. STUDENTS No. 3 and No. 4
approach SABRINA and JOHN and gently
escort THEM to the desk. A solo spot comes
up on the opposite side of the stage where
the LAWYER sits at a desk. There are two
empty chairs on the other side of the desk.
HE stands when HE sees THEM
approaching.*

LAWYER

John.

The LAWYER shakes JOHN'S hand.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Sabrina.

*The LAWYER hugs SABRINA. HE motions
for JOHN and SABRINA to sit down. THEY
sit. LAWYER sits down as well.*

LAWYER (CONT'D)

(to JOHN)

Please sit down. I'm so sorry to hear about your mother. She was a fine person.

JOHN

Thanks, I appreciate that.

The LAWYER gets out a stack of papers from the desk drawer.

LAWYER

As your mother's only heir, all of her estate goes to you.

JOHN and SABRINA nod.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Including this.

LAWYER reaches into a drawer and puts a safe deposit box on top of the desk. JOHN looks surprised.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Her safe deposit box. I'll give you a few minutes to look it over.

LAWYER leaves.

SABRINA

(referring to the box)

DID YOU KNOW SHE HAD SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

JOHN opens the box and begins taking things out. Media screen shows the contents.

JOHN

SHE NEVER MENTIONED IT TO ME.

JOHN examines a photo from the box. It displays on the media screen.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(sadly)

THAT'S MY PARTY WHEN I TURNED TEN.

JOHN shows SABRINA the photo. SABRINA puts her hand on JOHN'S shoulder tenderly.

SABRINA

LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE CUTE AS CAN BE!

SABRINA picks up a newspaper clipping from out of the box and holds it up. It displays on the media screen. This photo exactly matches the band playing in the next section.

SO WHO IS THIS HERE?

JOHN examines the clipping.

JOHN

IT'S SO OLD AND UNCLEAR
I HAVE NO IDEA WHO HE MIGHT BE

SABRINA

So who is Aaron Thomas?

SCENE 2

The spot light slowly fades to black on SABRINA and JOHN. THEY remain seated onstage. With another loud rimshot, OLD LING-SI abruptly appears in a solo spot at center stage and addresses the audience. While OLD LING-SI speaks, all four STUDENTS bring onstage an overstuffed armchair, a tall bar stool, three high backed chairs, a functioning lava lamp, piano, two guitars on stands, and a few posters of Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison. AARON, SCOTT, DAVID, PAUL, and RAMON come onstage in the darkness. MR. PO, MRS. PO, LING-SI, and JING take their places in the apartment above the shop.

OLD LING-SI

The year is now 1970 in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in early July. Aaron Thomas and his four bandmates live in an aging three story Victorian on Page Street near the panhandle of Golden Gate Park. The neighborhood has certainly seen better days with many of the stately Victorians now unceremoniously carved into separate apartments. With Aaron as their leader, the band is a staple at the San Francisco area anti-war rally scene. Perhaps bandmates doesn't accurately describe the relationship these young men have. They are indeed a family of devoted artists.

The lights slowly come up on AARON and his BANDMATES as well as the PO FAMILY. OLD LING-SI turns to look at AARON.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

Oh, there they are. I remember them all so well. Let's see what these creative artists are up to.

The solo spot on OLD LING-SI slowly fades as she leaves the stage. Cut to AARON THOMAS' Haight-Ashbury apartment in San Francisco and the PO family shop. The lights illuminate AARON'S apartment and the PO FAMILY area above the shop. The year is 1970. The time is just before noon.

At the floor level the stage is split into AARON'S apartment on the left and the PO family shop on the right. Above is the PO family apartment and JING'S room. Above the apartment is a small rooftop area. SABRINA and JOHN remain seated in the darkness. The BAND is practicing "ANTHEM REHEARSAL". AARON and RAMON play electric guitars, SCOTT plays the keyboard, DAVID plays the bass, and Paul plays the drums. The apartment is filled with 60s paraphernalia, including lava lamps, posters, and many musical instruments, including a piano. JING, MR. PO, MRS. PO, and LING-SI are all in the apartment above the shop. LING-SI is busy in the kitchen while the others are seated and reading. The scene opens with wild psychedelic images on the media screen. AARON, RAMON, and DAVID sing "CUE 4-ANTHEM REHEARSAL".

AARON/RAMON/DAVID

NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH
 NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH
 NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH
 NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH

Media screen goes dark.

SCOTT

Well, that sucked.

AARON

Words. A song with words would be good.

RAMON

(to AARON)

Great groove, but it almost doesn't need words. Or you could make crazy shit up. Like Dylan.

RAMON (CONT'D)

(singing to the tune of the "ANTHEM" and emulating Dylan's voice)

LOST IN THE OZONE
ON CHRISTMAS DAY
GATHER ROUND ALL YOU CLOWNS
ON YOUR KNEES TO PRAY

SCOTT

*(emulating Dylan's voice to the tune of "LIKE A ROLLING
STONE")*

HOW DOES IT FEEL? TO BE A SCHLAMIEL?

AARON

(emulating Dylan's voice too)

You guy's are unreal.

*AARON laughs at the boys good-naturedly.
The BAND members put down their
instruments and sit down.*

AARON (CONT'D)

(Now in a normal voice.)

But this is supposed to be anti-war. Inspirational.

RAMON lights a marijuana cigarette.

RAMON

Inspire this.

*RAMON hands AARON the lighted joint. HE
waves the joint away. RAMON gives the
joint to DAVID.*

DAVID

Speaking of lost in the ozone.

*Takes a long drag on the joint. AARON
jumps out of his chair. Looks at his watch.*

AARON

Hey, it's almost time! Paul!

PAUL

I'll do it.

PAUL goes to the phone.

AARON

Well, here goes. The moment of truth. God help us all.

PAUL

Not for me. I'm 4F. Asthma.

PAUL dials the phone.

AARON

Yeah, well the rest of us are in school. Some more than others...

AARON looks at his BAND mates.

SCOTT

Hey, college beats Vietnam any day.

RAMON sings quietly to himself to the tune of "ANTHEM".

RAMON

LOST IN THE OZONE, ON CHRISTMAS DAY...

PAUL

Shut up Ramon, I can't hear!

DAVID

Please God, a high number.

AARON

I hear they're taking only up through 198.

PAUL

(speaking into the phone)

Hi, I'd like to get the lottery numbers for the draft. I have four birth dates I'd like to check.

(to RAMON)

Hey Ramon, when's your birthday?

RAMON sings this into PAUL'S ear to the tune of Anthem.

RAMON

SEPTEMBER 27

PAUL tries to slap RAMON good-naturedly.

September 27. PAUL
(into the phone)

Pause and then to RAMON.

233! PAUL (CONT'D)

Yeah! Fuck school! RAMON

Cheering from the BAND.

Scott, what's yours? PAUL
(to SCOTT)

August 25. SCOTT

August 25. PAUL
(into the phone)

Pause then to SCOTT.

286! PAUL (CONT'D)

Yes! SCOTT

RAMON hugs SCOTT. More cheering.

David? PAUL

Mine's July 19th. DAVID
(to PAUL)

July 19th. PAUL
(into the phone)

Pause and then to DAVID.

227! PAUL (CONT'D)

DAVID
(relieved)
Thank you, thank you.

More cheering. RAMON slaps DAVID on the back.

AARON
(to himself)
Please God.
(then more loudly to PAUL)
February 17th.

PAUL
(into the phone)
February 17th.

Pause and then to AARON.

189. PAUL (CONT'D)

EVERYONE is thunderstruck. There is a long silence as EVERYONE looks at AARON.

SCOTT
(clueless)
Is 189 bad?

DAVID slaps SCOTT on the back of the head. EVERYONE glares at SCOTT. AARON begins to pace. RAMON comes over to AARON and puts his hands on his shoulders to settle him down. PAUL hangs up the phone.

RAMON
Hey, you're a student. You still get the deferment, right?

AARON

(beginning to panic)

Yeah, but I went below the 15 unit minimum.

AARON sits down nervously in a chair.

RAMON

Man, that makes you 1A.

SCOTT

(mindlessly)

It's okay. You'll see.

SCOTT comes over and kisses the top of AARON's head. AARON pats SCOTT'S arm in appreciation.

AARON

Report for active duty?

RAMON

Easy. Let's not panic yet.

Pats AARON on the back.

DAVID

You can appeal.

AARON

(slightly panicked)

I can't do this.

DAVID

Remember what happened to David Harris?

RAMON

(concerned)

So what are the options, man?

AARON

(calming down)

Not many. Go underground or prison.

PAUL

Tough choice.

DAVID

This will all work out, don't worry.

SCOTT

(mindlessly)

Who's David Harris?

EVERYONE, except AARON, looks at SCOTT for being so clueless. AARON stands. HE is lost in thought and stares out at the audience. Shakes his head slightly and lets out a sigh of frustration.

RAMON

Where's that J?

Flash forward to the present day in the LAWYER'S office. Lights come up on JOHN and SABRINA who are still seated at the desk. The PO FAMILY continues to be illuminated while AARON and the BAND MEMBERS fade to black. AARON and the BAND MEMBERS leave the stage. Four STUDENTS remove the chairs and other apartment props. SABRINA and JOHN continue their conversation as THEY examine the contents of the safe deposit box. SABRINA picks up a photo from the box. Media screen displays the image. THEY sing "CUE 5-IT'S THE SAME PERSON".

SABRINA

IT'S THE SAME PERSON IN THIS ONE HERE

SABRINA holds the photo for JOHN to see. It appears on the media screen.

JOHN

WHY THESE PHOTOS OF SOME RANDOM GUY?

SABRINA

ALL THE PHOTOS HERE ARE FAMILY AND YOU

JOHN
EXCEPT THIS GUY I WONDER WHY?
MAYBE MOM KNEW
OR AT LEAST HAD A CLUE
I KNOW SHE WOULD WANT ME TO TRY

SABRINA
Try what?

JOHN
WHY DO THINK THESE ARE HERE?

*JOHN holds the photos of AARON, the
media screen displays them.*

SABRINA
No idea.

JOHN
I THINK THIS HAS TO DO WITH ME

SABRINA
(questioningly)
How?

JOHN
I DON'T KNOW WHO MY REAL PARENTS ARE

SABRINA
YOU'RE FORGETTING THAT NEITHER DID SHE

JOHN
THAT MAY BE TRUE
BUT SHE LEFT US A CLUE

SABRINA
SO WHY DIDN'T SHE TELL YOU OR ME?

JOHN
You sound like you don't want to know!

SABRINA
She didn't know either! She even said so!

JOHN
Maybe Mom didn't know, but I bet she had a clue.

SABRINA

And she never told you? I don't think so.

SABRINA pauses for a moment and looks at the photos.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

So what's the date on that thing?

JOHN

April 24, 1971

SABRINA

Right after you were born.

JOHN

(becoming more animated)

It would explain a lot. Why she kept it. The date. And in San Francisco, the same city where I was born.

SABRINA

(not convinced)

Aren't you forgetting something? The records were lost! Remember?

JOHN

WE DON'T NEED THOSE RECORDS NOW

SABRINA

What do you mean?

JOHN

WE HAVE A YEAR
WE HAVE A NAME

SABRINA

DON'T GET YOUR HOPES TOO HIGH
THIS COULD BE NOTHING BUT PAIN

JOHN

I HAVE TO TRY
I HAVE TO KNOW WHY
OTHERWISE I'LL GO INSANE

SABRINA looks intently at the photos.

SABRINA

Wait! Wait a minute. Show me those again.

*JOHN show SABRINA the photos again.
THEY display on the media screen.*

SABRINA (CONT'D)

The same girl is in all three photos!

JOHN

Oh my God! She's Chinese!

Lights come down on SABRINA and JOHN while the four STUDENTS begin to remove the desk and chairs. SABRINA and JOHN leave the stage. Begin "CUE 6-FLASHBACK MUSIC". Lights remain up on the PO FAMILY apartment and shop. JING, LING-SI, MR. PO and MRS. PO come down the stairs and enter the shop. Flashback to 1970. The shop is filled with some clothing, works of art, jewelry, and furniture, but most of the shelves are bare. A guzheng sits on top of the counter. MRS. PO, JING, and LING-SI busy themselves in the shop while MR. PO reads the newspaper while seated at the counter. OLD LING-SI slowly walks onto the stage followed by a solo spot. SHE looks at the PO family with a distant look on her face as she begins to speak.

OLD LING-SI

Yes, that's me and my family in 1970. It seems like yesterday. If I could only bring those days back. And I was so thin! My mom and dad immigrated to San Francisco after World War II. Intent on finding a safe place to raise a family, they set up shop at the corner of Grant and Clay in the heart of Chinatown. Their new home was a block or two from historic Portsmouth Square, the gathering place for all Chinatown. They lived above the shop in a small apartment for less than two years before the first of their two daughters came along. I was born in 1946 and Jing in 1949. As you can see, Jing was the quintessential Chinese beauty with a perfectly proportioned face and flawless porcelain skin, her long black hair falling almost to her waist. I mean, just look at her, a Chinese flower child! And her beauty was not lost on the young men of Chinatown, who often came sniffing around the shop. I admit that I was jealous at times. A little. She would always create such a stir with the boys, while no one would even notice me. It was like being the invisible sister. But I never let it show. So, let's meet the family!

*OLD LING-SI reluctantly leaves the stage,
glancing over her shoulder as she goes.*

MR. PO

(worried, looking at the newspaper, to MRS. PO)

Oh my God! Things are getting really bad back at home.

MRS. PO

We're lucky we got out in time.

MR. PO

Forced labor. Re-education.

MR. PO shakes his head.

MRS. PO

The entire Fong family disappeared.

MR. PO

Zhou Enlai and Mao's wife. What a mess.

MRS. PO

We're safe here. Our girls are free here.

MR. PO

I just wish the shop was more of a success.

MRS. PO

(to JING)

Play something for your father to cheer him up.

*JING nods and picks up the guzheng and
begins to play the instrumental "CUE 7-
GUZHENG SOLO".*

MR. PO

Very nice.

JING

Thank you, Father.

MR. PO

(to JING, raising his finger)

In Chinese!

JING

Xie xie.

JING puts down the guzheng and goes over to the counter where LING-SI is working. SHE picks up the newspaper.

JING (CONT ' D)
Big Brother is at Cal next weekend! We should go.

LING-SI
If I can get away from here.

MRS. PO
Ling-si, would you run to the dry cleaners later please?

LING-SI
(to JING)
See what I mean?

LING-SI turns back towards MRS. PO.

LING-SI (CONT ' D)
(to MRS. PO)
Shi. (Yes)

JING
We should check out Haight-Ashbury. I know this great coffee shop!

LING-SI
Easy for you to say college girl.

JING
Come on. It will be fun!

MR. PO
Girls, help your mother with the new dresses.

JING
(to MRS. PO, with a poor Chinese accent)
Ni xian zai zuo shen mo? (What are you doing?)

MR. PO shakes his head in disapproval with her poor Chinese.

MRS. PO
(with the proper accent)
Ni xian zai zuo shen mo?

JING and LING-SI help MRS. PO move dresses from a portable rack to the shop floor. LING-SI, MRS. PO, and JING sing "CUE 8-THE PO SHOP".

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO
DO IT ONE MORE TIME
THIS TIME SLOW

JING

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

MRS. PO

(to JING)

IS THIS REALLY ALL YOU KNOW?
And besides!
HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO GET A MAN?

JING

(slightly annoyed)

I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO THE BEST I CAN

MRS. PO

LEARN CHINESE, DON'T DRESS THIS WAY

MRS. PO points at JING.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

YOU SCARE ALL THE MEN AWAY

MRS. PO goes over to the register and leaves JING and LING-SI by themselves.

LING-SI

Teasing, LING-SI wags her finger at JING in fun, imitating their mother.

THIS TIME SLOW
YOU CHINESE HO
STUDY LIKE MOM SAID

JING

THE FAULTS NOT MINE
I'M WORKING ALL THE TIME
I'D RATHER GO AND SEE THE GRATEFUL DEAD

JING and LING-SI laugh.

LING-SI

(to JING)

Your Chinese is worse than mine. And you even have a tutor! It's not like Mom and Dad haven't tried. It's always Chinese everything. Even men.

JING

(teasing)

You don't like Chinese men?

LING-SI

(indignantly)

That's not what I meant. America is such a smorgasbord. So much to choose from.

JING

That's why Cal is so great. You've got Apollinaire, Edna St. Vincent Millay. Even the Grateful Dead.

LING-SI

And lots of guys.

JING smiles and nods knowingly. MRS. PO comes back over to JING and LING-SI.

MRS. PO

FOR CHINESE MEN I'D RECOMMEND
LEARN JUST WHAT THEY LIKE
BUT LOOK AT WHAT YOU WEAR
I'M SURPRISED THAT YAO CARES

JING

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTS ALRIGHT!
And it's not to teach me Chinese!

MRS. PO

(demonstrating for JING)

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO
DO IT ONE MORE TIME
NOT SO SLOW

JING

(JING struggles with the pronunciation)

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

MRS. PO

LISTEN THIS IS HOW IT GOES

JING/MRS. PO

(MRS. PO leads JING)

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

MRS. PO

DO IT ONE MORE TIME

JING

I KNOW, I KNOW!

JING/MRS. PO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

MRS. PO

YOU STILL HAVE A WAYS TO GO

MRS. PO shakes her head in frustration

JING/MRS. PO

(MRS. PO leads JING)

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

JING'S pronunciation is getting better.

MRS. PO

There you go!

MRS. PO continues to lead JING.

JING/MRS. PO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

NI XIAN ZAI ZUO SHEN MO

MRS. PO

That's better.

JING

Xie xie ni.

MRS. PO

You see. Yao is a good tutor.

LING-SI and JING go back to putting dresses on the racks. MRS. PO heads upstairs to the apartment to make tea.

JING

We need to get you out of here more often.

LING-SI

Who's gonna mind the shop? You? You're always at Cal!

JING

How 'bout our landlord? That guy checks you out big time.

LING-SI

Yao checks out everything in a skirt! Including you. Why do think he wants to be your tutor?

JING

He's harmless enough I guess.

JING picks up the guzheng and plays a few bars of a blues riff on the guzheng. Play "CUE 9-BLUES"

MR. PO

I don't think that was a melody I know. Very different.

JING

Very different.

JING puts down the guzheng while SHE talks to her father.

MR. PO

So you are practicing Chinese with your sister?

JING

Shi, dui de. Ta de mian kong hen xiang yi tiao yu.

MR. PO

(laughing)

She has the face of a fish? Or something like that! Ni gu ke demian kong yie hen xiang yi tiao yu.

JING

(laughing with her father)

I don't think there's any hope for me!

The TV news is showing images of the latest antiwar protest. Media screen displays the images.

MR. PO

(angry, and pointing to the TV)

Look at this. More protesters! They should show more respect for their country!

JING

They're trying to save their country.

MRS. PO comes down from the apartment with the tea. She sets it down on the counter by the register and begins to pour.

MR. PO

(annoyed)

From what?

JING

From war.

LING-SI

(to JING, under her breath)

Don't start.

MR. PO

I don't think so.

JING is about to respond, but LING-SI comes over and gently takes JING by the shoulders and moves HER away from HER father.

MRS. PO

(oblivious to the conversation)

Tea everyone.

SCENE 3

THE PO FAMILY leaves the stage as the lights come down on the shop. Flash forward to the present day. In low light all four STUDENTS bring a chair, desk, and computer onstage. Lights come down then JOHN enters the stage and sits down in front of the computer. In a solo spot JOHN is asleep in front of the computer late at night. SABRINA comes slowly onto stage in HER robe. SHE gently touches his shoulder and HE awakens. THEY sing “CUE 10-YOU STILL AT IT?”

SABRINA

YOU STILL AT IT?
COME TO BED IT'S LATE
YOU'RE GONNA NEED YOUR REST

JOHN nods slowly. SABRINA comes over to the computer and looks over HIS shoulder at the screen. SHE tenderly puts HER hands on HIS shoulders.

JOHN

I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND VERY MUCH AT ALL

SABRINA

YOU SCARE ME. YOU'RE SO OBSESSED.

JOHN ignores her.

JOHN

(looking at the screen)

FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS
AARON THOMAS PLAYED HERE
A COFFEE HOUSE ON HAIGHT WEST

JOHN points to the computer. The media screen shows a newspaper clipping announcing AARON THOMAS playing at the Haight Coffee House.

SABRINA

THE CHINESE GIRL? ANYTHING AT ALL?

Nothing.

JOHN

*JOHN pushes his chair away from the desk
in frustration.*

SABRINA

I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED!

JOHN

THIS IS NOT A GOOD SIGN
WHAT IF THERE'S NOTHING TO FIND

SABRINA

YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT YET
YOU KNOW YOU WANT THIS
BROADEN YOUR SEARCH
CAL HAS ARCHIVES NEARBY

JOHN

WHAT IF I FIND SOMETHING
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

SABRINA

YOU STILL HAVE TO TRY

(pause, trying to cheer him up)

So. What else you got?

JOHN

Just this coffee house.

*JOHN goes back to the computer. SABRINA
looks over his shoulder at the image of the
coffee shop. The image is displayed on the
media screen and is exactly the same as the
coffee house onstage. Fade to black as
SABRINA and JOHN leave the stage.*

SCENE 4

Begin “CUE 11-SCENE 4 INTRO”. In low light the STUDENTS bring on five tables, ten chairs, cups, and lighted candles for each table. All four STUDENTS sit down at two of the tables and begin to quietly smoke a joint. The tables are arranged in a semicircle and facing away from the audience and towards the band. The center table is for JING and LING-SI when they come onstage. Four other cast members not involved in the scene come onstage and sit down. Upstage there is a small 3 foot high riser where AARON, DAVID, RAMON, SCOTT, and PAUL have set up their musical gear. The year is now 1970. Local coffee house in Haight-Ashbury where AARON’S band is playing. It is dark and hip with a small stage for the band. Lots of 60s decor. Onstage the coffee house is now where AARON’S apartment use to be. The BAND comes onstage as AARON steps up to the mic. A WAITRESS comes onstage to attend to the seated customers. SHE seems to be interested in AARON. Wait until cue is finished before going ahead.

AARON

Good evening everyone. Thanks for coming out tonight for a little music, prose, and coffee. And don't forget to tip your waitress. We are the Aaron Thomas band and I'm Aaron Thomas, your host for the evening. We'd like to start tonight with a song written by our own union activist Ramon Ochoa. It's about a girl he knew well in high school. Maybe too well!

RAMON AND AARON SING “CUE 12-MARY JANE”.

RAMON

SHE GOT YOU IN TROUBLE IN HIGH SCHOOL
 YOU THOUGHT SHE WAS ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS
 SHE TOTALLED YOUR CAR
 PUT YOU BEHIND BARS
 BUT THAT'S NOT WHERE THE STORY ENDS

REMEMBER THAT WEEKEND IN VEGAS
SHE PROMISED YOU'D HAVE A GOOD TIME
BUT WHEN YOU GOT CAUGHT WITH 12 POUNDS OF POT
SHE SAID "DUDE IT'S A VICTIMLESS CRIME"

LING-SI and JING enter the coffee shop and sit down at a table. In the dimly lit ambience AARON does not see JING. The WAITRESS glares at JING and LING-SI as they sit down.

RAMON/AARON

MARY JANE, MARY JANE

RAMON

I KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T HELP BUT LOVE HER
NO MATTER WHAT I MIGHT SAY
SHE MAKES IT SO REAL
THE WAY THAT YOU FEEL
AND WITHOUT HER YOU'D NEVER GET LAID
SHE ALWAYS SAID THERE'S STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
HOW THEY TREAT HER JUST ISN'T FAIR
THERE'S NO WAY TO COPE
WITHOUT PEACE, LOVE, AND DOPE
IT'S GOT TO BE 4:20 SOMEWHERE

AARON/RAMON

MARY JANE, MARY JANE

JING and LING-SI have their conversation during the guitar solo.

JING

(referring to AARON)

Ooo! Who is that?

JING appears to be transfixed as AARON performs. LING-SI looks at HER with concern.

LING-SI

I thought we were here for the coffee.

JING doesn't respond.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

(in a teasing voice)

Remember, only Chinese men!

JING

(smiling)

Too late!

WAITRESS brings two cups of tea and put them down on JING'S table and glares at THEM.

AARON/RAMON

MARY JANE, MARY JANE

RAMON

So is anyone holding?

Applause. SCOTT raises his hand enthusiastically

AARON

Thank you so much. Now for something different. Open mic for you poets. Any poets out there with something to say?

JING raises HER hand and looks at AARON. AARON is immediately struck by her beauty and cannot respond for a moment.

LING-SI

(surprised by HER sister)

What are you doing?

AARON

The mic is yours.

LING-SI

Jing!

AARON comes down off the stage to JING'S table and takes HER by the hand and leads HER to the stage. AARON appears to be awestruck.

AARON

(to JING)
What's your name?

JING

(to AARON)
Jing Po.

AARON goes to the mic and introduces JING.

JING (CONT 'D)

Tonight's poet is Jing Po.

AARON and the BAND MEMBERS all vacate the stage and watch from the audience. With two spots on AARON and JING, the rest of the coffee shop seems to disappear.

JING (CONT 'D)

(softly)
This is called "Shimmer".

JING recites "CUE 13-SHIMMER". SHE appears to go into a trance with her eyes closed. Media screen shows images of French impressionistic art. AARON is transfixed.

JING (CONT 'D)

It is a reflection only time may reveal
That singular mirror of our true selves
The details of our lives
Are illuminated with painful clarity
No matter the distance
Each stands highlighted
Absolute and immutable
Waiting to be judged by God
Yet it is a reflection
Only of what can be seen
Not of the invisible
And unknowable depths

JING pauses briefly.

JING (CONT'D)

But it is in these depths
That lives are measured
The shallows of concern and care
The depths of love and sacrifice
The currents that steer our lives
There are those who languish in its depths
And never see the surface
Only you see beyond my reflection
Only you have seen my soul

JING opens her eyes. Applause. Lights come up. AARON stands and applauds enthusiastically. HE then goes to the stage.

AARON

(to JING, takes her hand)

Beautiful.

(to crowd)

Jing Po please!

More applause. AARON walks JING back to her table. JING sits while AARON stands and stares, smiling blankly. THEY are oblivious to everything except each other. LING-SI inspects AARON closely as she sips on her tea.

JING

Sit down.

AARON sits down.

AARON

That was wonderful.

JING

Thanks.

AARON

It reminds me of Baudelaire.

JING

French symbolism. The best.

AARON

I'm taking a French Symbolism class at Cal.

JING

With Aubert! I wrote Shimmer for his class!

AARON

I'm sure he loved it.

AARON tears himself away from JING and turns to LING-SI.

AARON (CONT'D)

Sorry to be so rude. I'm Aaron Thomas.

AARON shakes hands with LING-SI.

LING-SI

I'm Ling-si, Jing's sister.

AARON

A pleasure.

AARON turns back to JING.

JING

I haven't seen you here before.

AARON

We're the new band.

RAMON comes over to AARON and stands next to him. The other BAND MEMBERS go back onstage

RAMON

Dude, time to go back to work.

AARON

(to RAMON)

Just a minute.

The WAITRESS comes over to JING and LING-SI.

WAITRESS

(with malice)

A little far from Chinatown tonight, aren't we girls?

The WAITRESS traces her finger seductively across AARON'S shoulders and walks off.

AARON

(to WAITRESS)

That's enough.

RAMON

(to AARON)

Let's go.

AARON

(having trouble tearing himself away)

Okay, okay.

(to JING)

I have to go. Stay for the next song? I think you'll like it.

AARON stands up and starts to slowly back away from the table with RAMON taking HIM by the shoulder.

JING

Sure. Stop by our shop. Grant and Clay.

AARON

Great.

AARON steps on to the stage and snaps out of his trance-like state. The BAND gets ready for the next song.

LING-SI

How do you do shit like that? All in the space of ten minutes.

JING

He is such a cutie.

LING-SI

No doubt. But I hate to tell you, he's white! Mom and Dad would freak.

AARON

This next song is for my favorite new poet.

AARON looks right at JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

It's called "FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON".

AARON looks at JING. AARON and RAMON sing "CUE 14-FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON". Media screen shows psychedelic images.

AARON (CONT'D)

WHEN THE MOON IS HIGH
WHEN THE MOON IS HIGH
I LOSE MYSELF
BECOME SOMEONE ELSE
LOSE ALL CONTROL
SACRIFICE MY SOUL

AARON/RAMON

FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
I WOULD GLADLY DIE

AARON

WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES
YOUR FACE IS IN MY MIND
SO DELICATE AND FINE
TRACE ALL THE LINES
IN INFINITE DESIGN
I HAVE TO MAKE YOU MINE
I HAVE TO MAKE YOU MINE

AARON/RAMON

FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
I WOULD GLADLY DIE

AARON

I WASTE AWAY IN THE LIGHT OF THE DAY
THOSE EVENING SIRENS CALL
I HOPE TONIGHT THAT YOU'LL COME TO LIGHT

IT'S YOU OR NOTHING AT ALL
BESIDES A FACE OF SUCH DELICATE GRACE
YOUR EYES SEE THROUGH MY WALL
YOU MAKE ME SEE THE IMPOSSIBLE ME
SO SLAY ME ONCE AND FOR ALL

A sleepless dream commands me
Singular in purpose
Simple in design
With unspoken words it whispers
The quest for the divine
Of lovely apparitions
Of delicate figures in my mind
You are to my desire eternally consigned Compelled by ancient Eros
His will I can't deny
Before this dream is over
I have to make you mine
Before this dream is over
I have to make you mine.

WHEN THE MOON IS HIGH
WHEN THE MOON IS HIGH
IN THE EASTERN SKY
ALL MY HOPES WILL RISE
APPARITIONS IN MY MIND
TWO SLEEPLESS SOULS COMBINE
A GLIMPSE OF THE DIVINE
IF I COULD MAKE YOU MINE

AARON/RAMON

FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON
I WOULD GLADLY DIE

Applause. JING is beaming.

AARON

Thanks so much.

The WAITRESS comes over to JING and LING-SI'S table and drops the bill on the table from about two feet above. Media screen goes dark

WAITRESS

Pay up front. On your way out!

LING-SI

I think it's time to go.

JING

We just got here.

LING-SI

I think we've done enough damage for one night.

LING-SI throws down some money on the table, takes JING by the arm and heads off stage. AARON watches JING as SHE waves to him. The lights slowly fade to black. STUDENTS remove the tables, chairs, risers, and musical gear.

5

SCENE 5

5

The next day. Mid-afternoon. The PO family Chinatown import shop. JING and LING-SI are working in the downstairs PO family shop. MR. and MRS. PO are upstairs reading in the family apartment. JING and LING-SI sing "CUE 15-YAO ENTERS".

JING

HELL, WILL YOU LOOK AT THIS
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT

JING turns and looks at the shop inventory.

LING-SI

WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS
NOT FOR LONG

JING

NO TOURISTS, NO BUSINESS

LING-SI

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE WENT SO WRONG

JING

Neither do I.

LING-SI

It's gonna take a miracle to save this place.

LING-SI and JING busy THEMSELVES in the shop as YAO enters.

YAO

NI HAO (HELLO) LOVELY LADIES
HOW ARE YOU?

Leering slightly at JING.

LING-SI

NI HAO MASTER YAO
HERE FOR THE RENT?

(YAO nods)

JING

(to LING-SI quietly)

I HOPE WE HAVE IT

LING-SI

(to JING so YAO doesn't hear)

I DON'T THINK SO

JING

(to LING-SI quietly)

JUST TELL HIM THAT WE GAVE IT UP FOR LENT

JING and LING-SI smile at each other.

YAO

May I go upstairs?

LING-SI

Sure.

YAO starts moving up the stairs.

YAO

(to JING)

I KNOW YOU LOVE THE CHINESE HARP
I HAVE ONE OR TWO
I'D BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU ONE
IF THAT'S ALRIGHT WITH YOU
THINK ABOUT IT JING
SUCH A BEAUTIFUL GUZHENG
THE ONE I HAVE IS PRACTICALLY BRAND NEW

MRS. PO opens the door for YAO and HE walks in to the upstairs apartment. MR. PO stands up and EVERYONE bows. Still visible, the girls busy themselves downstairs in the shop. One CUSTOMER enters the shop and begins to look around.

MRS. PO

NI HAO MASTER YAO
HOW ARE YOU?

YAO

I'M FINE, GOOD TO SEE YOU

MRS. PO
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?

MRS. PO goes to the kitchen to prepare the tea.

YAO
YES, THANK YOU
HOW'S BUSINESS?

MR. PO
I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT AS GOOD AS IT MIGHT BE

YAO
I saw your lovely daughters downstairs. I offered one of my guzhengs to Jing.

MRS. PO
(from the kitchen)
A very kind offer.

MR. PO hands YAO an envelope filled with cash.

MR. PO
(quietly to YAO)
We will get you the rest next week. You should be careful with so much cash.

YAO
I can take care of myself. I carry my own insurance.

YAO pats HIS coat pocket confidently where HE is keeping HIS gun. Pause)

YAO (CONT'D)
Jing is a fine musician. And a beautiful young woman.

MR. PO
And headstrong as well. I believe that Berkeley school is a bad influence.

MRS. PO returns to the living room with the tea.

MRS. PO
She is so American. And her Chinese is terrible!

YAO

She doesn't take it seriously.

MRS. PO begins to pour the tea. THEY begin to drink.

MRS. PO

Your tutoring once a week is not enough.

YAO

Certainly not. At least twice a week.

MRS. PO

That would be a great help.

MRS. PO looks at YAO.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Perhaps you might honor us by helping Jing twice a week. You are a fine son of China.

MR. PO

You know the traditional ways.

YAO

I would be happy to help.

YAO finishes his tea.

YAO (CONT'D)

I must go. Thank you for the tea.

YAO gets up to leave and heads downstairs, EVERYONE bows. MRS. PO goes downstairs with YAO.

YAO (CONT'D)

(now downstairs and looking at JING as HE walks off stage)

GOODBYE GIRLS SEE YOU SOON
REMEMBER THAT GUZHENG
I'LL BE BACK ON TUESDAY
FOR YOUR CHINESE LESSON JING

YAO leaves the stage. MRS. PO follows YAO to the edge of the stage and waves goodbye.

JING

Tuesday night?

LING-SI

(teasing)

Ooo, with Mr. Right!

FOR YOU I KNOW HE'S GOT A MAJOR THING

JING

(in a deep voice and swaggering a bit. Imitating YAO)

So my little concubine, I've come for the rent!

LING-SI

(in a high pitched melodramatic voice)

I don't have a thing! What could I possibly give you?

JING

(continuing her imitation)

Perhaps a little Szechuan? Word on the street is that yours is hot and spicy!

JING looks LING-SI up and down.

JING (CONT'D)

(continuing her imitation)

Give us a kiss!

LING-SI blows JING a kiss. LING-SI hugs HER sister and THEY laugh.

MRS. PO

Behave girls!

MRS. PO corners JING and talks quietly in order not to be heard by the customer. SHE is very excited. LING-SI goes to the register and does not hear the conversation. MR. PO reads the newspaper upstairs.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Your father and I have asked Yao to tutor you twice a week now.

JING

(nonplussed and in a normal voice)

Oh?

MRS. PO

Yes.

JING

(laughing slightly, then pause)

Oh, I see where this is going. I don't think this is about tutoring at all.

(pause, warily)

This couldn't have anything to do with our financial problems?

MRS. PO

(becoming annoyed)

You are Chinese, not American. Honor your heritage and family.

JING

(trying not to over-react)

Well, tell Yao that I am flattered but once a week is more than enough.

MRS. PO

(still annoyed)

Remember who you are young lady. Yao is an important man. His help could save this shop.

JING

(becoming slightly alarmed)

You're really serious about this, aren't you?

MRS. PO

We will talk later of this. There are customers who need help. Off with you.

JING helps the customer. AARON enters the shop. HE sees JING helping another customer and begins to look around. JING and LING-SI do not notice AARON. MRS. PO comes over to help AARON. SHE doesn't know who HE is.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

(to AARON)

May I help you?

AARON

(trying to charm her)

Yes thank you. Tomorrow is my parents' anniversary and they are quite the art collectors. Your shop was recommended by a friend.

MRS. PO

Why thank you. Any specific art form?

AARON

Mostly painting and sculpture.

HE looks at the paintings on the wall.

AARON (CONT'D)

These are most impressive.

MRS. PO

You have an eye for quality I see. These are all by Yun Shi.

AARON

I love his almost unfocused quality. Very impressionistic.

MRS. PO

Ah, you like French art.

AARON

I prefer a non-graphic approach. Leaves more to the imagination.

MRS. PO

There is similarity between the two styles.

AARON

No doubt.

MRS. PO

You are a well informed young man. It's nice to see a young person take such an interest in these things.

JING finishes with her CUSTOMER. SHE sees AARON with her MOTHER and begins to panic. SHE goes over to LING-SI at the register. The CUSTOMER leaves.

JING

(under her breath to LING-SI)

Holy shit. He's talking to Mom!

LING-SI stares in disbelief.

JING (CONT'D)

Don't stare!

AARON

My parents would love any of these. But I think I'll take this one.

MRS. PO

You are a most thoughtful son.

*MRS. PO takes the painting off the wall.
JING walks nervously over to AARON and
her MOTHER.*

JING

I think we need more tea mother.

AARON

(to MRS. PO)

Oh, this is your daughter! Thank you for your help.

MRS. PO bows and gives JING the painting.

MRS. PO

(to AARON)

My daughter Jing will wrap this for you.

(to JING)

Such a nice young man.

*JING can hardly believe what has happened.
MRS. PO goes upstairs to prepare more tea.*

JING

(to AARON, smiling and under her breath)

That was my mother!

AARON

(teasing)

I really was looking for something for my folks.

JING

(smiling)

You are so bad...

AARON

(to LING-SI at the register)

Hi Ling-si. How's business?

LING-SI

(nervously)

You're going to get us in trouble.

MR. and MRS. PO come downstairs with the tea.

MR. PO

(referring to AARON)

Are you helping your customer Jing?

JING

(flustered)

Uh, no, not yet.

MR. and MRS. PO watch as THEY drink their tea.

AARON

(enjoying the situation)

Yes, I could use some more help. Pajamas for my grandmother perhaps?

JING

(under her breath and smiling)

Pajamas? Are you kidding? You're killing me here, smart ass!

SHE goes to the shelf and starts going through the pajamas.

JING (CONT'D)

(in a mocking voice and getting into the spirit of the situation)

Isn't this one nice? So feminine. I'm sure it would look great on you!

MR. and MRS. PO finish their tea and head upstairs.

MR. PO

(to MRS. PO)

What a well mannered boy.

MRS. PO

For an American.

MR. and MRS. PO disappear into the apartment. MR. PO goes back to the newspaper.

*MRS. PO occupies herself in the kitchen.
JING, LING-SI, and AARON all gather
around the register.*

JING

(laughing)

You fruitcake! That was supposed to be funny?

AARON

Actually, it was kind of funny.

JING

(smiling)

Yeah, I guess.

LING-SI

(with a disapproving look)

Not funny.

AARON pays LING-SI at the register.

JING

(tenderly)

I loved your song last night.

AARON

Thanks.

*AARON looks intently at JING. LING-SI
comes out from behind the register and takes
AARON good naturedly by the arm and
moves him towards the door.*

LING-SI

(interrupting AARON in an exaggerated, patronizing voice)

Time to go now...

JING

What are you doing tonight?

AARON

Something with you I hope.

JING

Meet me at Portsmouth Square at 9 tonight. Next to the Goddess of Democracy statue.

AARON nods.

LING-SI

(in a mocking tone)

Thank you. Come again.

LING-SI ushers AARON out the door with his painting. AARON leaves while some other tourists enter the store. JING and LING-SI try to have their conversation at the register without drawing attention to themselves.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

(to JING)

Are you crazy? He's still white and a musician too!

JING

That's bad? Why is everyone so intolerant around here?

LING-SI

(sarcastically)

Maybe we should introduce him to Mom and Dad right now.

JING

I think Mom likes him already!

JING turns to a rack of dresses and looks at them intently.

JING (CONT'D)

So, what do you think I should wear tonight?

LING-SI

(sarcastically)

How about this?

Pulls a negligee off the rack and puts it up to JING. THEY both smile. Fade to black.

SCENE 6

That night. Scene changes to Portsmouth Square. Begin “CUE 16- NIGHT FAIR POEM.” The split level arrangement vanishes and the night fair occupies the entire stage. Lots of booths, musicians, lights, and people. Runway from the Holiday Inn is visible with the red roof entry. There are all kinds of booths: food, musical instruments, anti-war info, clothes, health booths, and everything Chinese. The STUDENTS bring on the night fair sets. The scene is colorful maze of people, noise, and non-western things. A big full moon behind the square and the Holiday Inn. The night fair is in full swing. Media screen shows Chinese art images, as well as the booths with JING and AARON exploring. JING is waiting nervously next to the Goddess of Democracy statue. SHE wears a beautifully embroidered, form fitting, Chinese black and white silk jacket. AARON arrives shortly thereafter amid all the people and hustle and bustle. Wait for cue to finish.

AARON

(enthusiastically)

Hi.

AARON goes to hug JING, but she motions him to stop.

JING

Not here. Too many neighbors.

AARON nods. THEY sit on a bench at the foot of the Goddess of Democracy statue.

AARON

You look wonderful.

JING

Thank you Aaron.

AARON

(trying to get it off his chest)

I have some bad news.

JING

(concerned)

What kind of bad news?

AARON

I have to go to Vietnam.

JING becomes very alarmed.

JING

Vietnam? When did this happen?

AARON

Lottery numbers happened the other day.

JING

(concerned)

Why didn't you tell me?

AARON

I tried to the other night, but you and Ling-si ran off so fast.

JING

She was freaking out. That waitress.

AARON

And you were so busy at the shop.

JING

Not exactly the place to hold a conversation!

AARON

I got a low number.

JING

But you're in school!

AARON

I had to drop a class. Went below the minimum.

JING
Oh no. What are you going to do?

AARON
I wish I knew.

*There is a pause in the conversation as
THEY look at each other.*

JING
Would you really go to Vietnam?

AARON
I don't know.

JING
(concerned)
You could go to prison.

AARON
I suppose it's better than Vietnam.

JING
Talk about a test of conviction.
(pause, thinking)

What about an appeal?

AARON
I don't think so, since I'm below the minimum.

JING
Could you do conscientious objector?

AARON
(shaking his head slightly)
I'd have to show a history of that kind of thing.

JING
How long do you have?

AARON
Less than a month probably.

JING
(surprised)
A month? Oh no.

JING pauses thoughtfully.

JING (CONT'D)

Would you really go to prison?

AARON

I guess I don't have much of a choice.

JING

This is a matter of conscience. If you cooperate, you'll have to live with it all your life.

AARON

That's what bothers me.

JING

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Remember that?

AARON

How do you know all this stuff?

JING

(smiling)
Berkeley student.

AARON

(reflectively)
I know what I have to do. I'm just afraid to do it.

JING

And for how long?

AARON

David Harris got two years.

JING

That's a long time.

AARON

(slowly, softly)
I have this feeling about you and me.

JING

(tenderly)
So do I.

AARON
But two years?

JING
(smiling)
I don't give up that easily.

AARON
(more seriously)
So what do you think I should do?

JING
(frightened for AARON)
My God, it's war! You could be killed.

AARON just shakes his head.

JING (CONT'D)
But if you don't go, I see only one choice.

AARON
(thoughtfully)
Yeah. Be the change you want to see.

JING
You know the landlord guy I was talking about, Yao?

AARON
Yeah.

JING
Well, Mom and Dad don't think I'm Chinese enough so they've asked him to tutor me. But it's not about that. Yao wants something else.

AARON looks intently at JING.

AARON
(surprised)
What do you mean?

JING
He knows Mom and Dad are in deep financial shit. So he's taking advantage to get what he wants.

AARON
(becoming alarmed)
Over my dead body!

JING
I respectfully declined.

THEY start to walk among the booths.

AARON
Glad to hear it. But that's outrageous.

JING
And Mom's not giving up. Makes me feel like a piece of meat.

AARON
That's not fair to you!

AARON shakes his head in disbelief.

JING
Mom is pissed. She's trying to get the guilt thing to work. I feel terrible about it.

AARON stops again and looks in her eyes.

AARON
Don't do that! You have a life too.

AARON lowers his voice and speaks tentatively.

AARON (CONT'D)
A life with me, I hope.

JING
(smiling at AARON)
I was hoping you might say that.

AARON
Tell you what. Let's forget about that for now. And just enjoy ourselves tonight.

JING
Are you sure?

AARON
I just want to be with you.

THEY stop walking. AARON pauses and reaches in his pocket)

I have a little something for you.

AARON (CONT'D)

HE hands JING a small box. SHE smiles and opens it.

It's beautiful!

JING

Blue moonstone from Sri Lanka. May I put it on you?

AARON

JING nods. AARON puts the pendant on JING. SHE is beaming.

I love it. Thank you so much!

JING

AARON sings a phrase of "FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON".

AARON
FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON.

JING smiles.

So this is the night fair.

AARON (CONT'D)

Happens every Saturday night. Follow me. I want to show you something.

JING

JING attempts to take AARON'S hand, but he resists.

All those neighbors!

AARON

THEY laugh. JING takes AARON'S hand and THEY begin to walk.

What the hell.

JING

THEY go to a musical instrument booth that has all kinds of instruments, including traditional Chinese instruments. A BOOTH ATTENDANT watches the instruments.

AARON

I'm a musician and I don't recognize half of these instruments.

JING

A lot of these are traditional Chinese instruments. Check this out.

JING selects a guzheng and sits down to play. AARON is amazed.

AARON

I thought you played piano!

JING

(referring to herself)

Chinese...all part of the gig.

AARON

A woman of many talents.

AARON gives a knowing look at JING. SHE smiles.

AARON (CONT'D)

That looks hard to play. How is it tuned?

JING

Four octave pentatonic scale. 21 strings. Moveable bridge. I use finger picks on the right hand and push on the strings with the left to bend the notes. It's called a guzheng.

AARON

Very cool. How long have you been playing?

JING

Since I was a little girl.

AARON

Well done.

JING

(playfully)

So get a guitar Elvis. Let's see what kind of Chinese chops you got.

AARON selects a guitar and sits down in a chair.

JING (CONT'D)

(smiling)

C pentatonic. No f. No b. Try to keep up.

*AARON nods. As the song starts, the booth attendant recognizes the song and adds his own percussion of tapping feet, drums, and gong. JING starts to play and sing "CUE 17-**SPRING ON THE MOUNTAIN**". AARON listens intently and then joins JING.*

JING (CONT'D)

SPRING TIME, NEW BAMBOO
ALL OF THE EARTH BECOMES BRAND NEW
SNOW NOW FEEDS THE STREAM
SUN AND THE LIGHT BEAM
NEW PART HERE.
MOUNTAINS STILL ASLEEP
UNDER THE SNOW THAT LAYS SO DEEP
WHEN THEY KNOW IT'S SPRING
ALL OF THE EARTH SINGS
SPRING TIME, NEW BAMBOO
ALL OF THE EARTH BECOMES BRAND NEW
SNOW NOW FEEDS THE STREAM
SUN AND THE LIGHT BEAM

When the song finishes THEY both break into laughter.

AARON

That was fun.

JING

(smiling)

Not bad for a rocker.

*THEY put down the instruments and begin to walk. AARON takes JING'S hand. JING sees a neighbor in a booth. Begin "CUE 18-**WALKING MUSIC**".*

JING (CONT'D)

Ni hao (hello) Mrs. Wong.

AARON

You must know everyone around here!

JING

Some.

Spying the anti-war booth, AARON leads JING to the next booth. YAO now appears and is wandering around the night fair, but hasn't seen JING and AARON yet

AARON

Come on, I have something to show you.

THEY head to the anti-war booth. AARON picks up a brochure and shows JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

Look who's playing tomorrow at the rally! The Aaron Thomas band. These guys rock!

JING

You're playing tomorrow? How cool!

AARON

Can you come?

JING

Sure.

AARON

Should be a big crowd.

THEY start to walk again. THEY come to the Planned Parenthood booth. AARON picks up an IUD.

AARON (CONT'D)

Hmm, what is this? What does IUD stand for?

JING laughs and picks a brochure on vasectomies and looks at it blankly.

JING

Gee, what's a vasectomy? And what are these big scissors for?

AARON

(laughing)

Not funny.

JING

(playfully)

Ah, the male ego. Such a fragile thing.

AARON

(in a melodramatic tone)

It's not easy being male.

THEY start walking again. The tone of the conversation becomes more serious.

JING

(firing right back at him)

Try being Chinese and female.

AARON

(in a more serious tone)

Nothing is simple.

JING

My parents would totally freak if they knew about you. And Americans are just as bad. Like that waitress.

AARON

No joke.

(smiling)

But I think your Mom already likes me!

JING

Yeah. If you buy something.

(pause)

Are you hungry? How about some Chinese?

AARON

Definitely. I could even go for something to eat.

*JING shoots him a look and then smiles.
THEY walk up to a Chinese food booth*

JING

Hi Mrs. Lee.

MRS. LEE

Hello Jing.

MRS. LEE looks disapprovingly at AARON.

JING

(to AARON)

Try the Dim Sum. The vegetarian is best.

AARON

Sounds good.

AARON sings softly to the tune of "FOR THE LOVE OF THE MOON".

AARON (CONT'D)

FOR THE LOVE OF SOME FOOD
I WOULD GLADLY FRY

JING smiles at AARON's humor.

JING

Two vegetarian Dim Sum please.

MRS. LEE hands her the food while glaring at AARON. AARON pays MRS. LEE and starts to walk away.

MRS. LEE

(so AARON can't hear)

Who's your friend? Do your parents know?

JING

(in an exaggerated, patronizing voice)

Thank you Mrs. Lee.

MRS. LEE

(softly to JING)

He's a white boy.

JING

(beginning to anger)

Yes, he is. Is that a problem?

AARON hears JING and comes back over to the counter.

AARON

Is everything alright?

JING

(answering AARON but making sure MRS. LEE can hear her)

Some people don't think I should be with an American boy.

AARON

That's alright, let's go.

JING

(speaking loudly for all to hear)

It's not alright. It's like you're not good enough!

(starting to get angry)

Maybe this food isn't good enough!

JING puts HER food back on the counter and glares at MRS. LEE.

AARON

(to JING)

It's okay. Let's go.

(to MRS. LEE)

Sorry.

HE picks up JING'S food off the counter.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to JING)

Are you okay?

No response from JING. AARON carries the food to a nearby table. THEY sit.

JING

(still fuming)

You're special to me. And it makes me crazy when people say stuff like that.

AARON

Do you know her?

JING

A neighbor. It's like they're still in China.

AARON

(smiling, teasing)

So. How special am I?

JING

Special enough to piss me off!

Laughter.

AARON

What higher praise.

AARON pause thoughtfully and looks at JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

I was thinking about your poem the other night. Why such a personal piece?

JING

The usual. Am I Chinese or American? A family that doesn't really know me, except Ling-si.

AARON

And the last lines? Who has seen beyond your reflection?

JING looks long and hard at AARON.

JING

I think you know.

JING and AARON start to kiss tentatively, still wary. YAO comes over to JING and AARON. YAO puts his hands on his hips.

YAO

(in a condescending tone)

Jing, your parents would not be pleased.

AARON

Who's this?

AARON stands up in a protective manner.

YAO

Jing!

I should go.

JING

JING looks torn and stands up slowly.

Why? Who is this guy?

AARON

JING

Remember the landlord I told you about?

AARON

(beginning to anger)

So this is Yao.

AARON turns to face YAO.

AARON (CONT'D)

This is none of your...

JING

(interrupting, trying to calm AARON)

It's okay. You don't understand.

AARON

Please...

JING just shakes her head.

JING

It's a family thing. I have to go.

AARON

You on campus Monday?

JING nods and turns to leave the stage.

AARON (CONT'D)

(calling after her)

Sproul Plaza! Noon!

JING nods again as SHE walks away. YAO turns to follow JING and smirks slightly at AARON as he goes. Fade to black.

SCENE 7

Begin “CUE 19-SCENE 7 INTRO”. STUDENTS remove all the night fair set. Sproul Plaza on the UC Berkeley campus a few days later. AARON, DAVID, RAMON, SCOTT, and PAUL are setting up for a concert in the plaza. It is a few minutes before noon. The BAND is erecting a small stage with a large banner draped across the front declaring “Make a difference. Join Students For A Democratic Society.” There is a small card table in front of the band with a single chair. JING walks briskly onstage wearing a Cal crop top and low-rise jeans with sandals. Her raw sexuality is impossible to conceal. Wait for cue to finish before AARON sees her and rushes to embrace her passionately.

AARON

(excited)
I'm so glad you could come.

AARON and JING separate. AARON takes JING'S hands.

AARON (CONT'D)

You are so beautiful.

JING

Thank you kind sir. I have a lit class at 2, so no problem.

AARON

I was a little worried after the other night.

JING

It's kind of hard to explain.

It is now slightly after noon and RAMON calls to AARON.

RAMON

Hey, Aaron, let's go.

AARON ignores RAMON.

AARON

(to JING)

Could you do me a favor?

JING

Sure.

AARON

We're trying to recruit people for SDS. That's why we're playing here. Could you pass out the SDS stuff while we play? It's the best seat in the house!

AARON points to the card table.

AARON (CONT'D)

And then I have a little surprise for you!

JING sits down in the chair at the card table. AARON climbs on stage and prepares to play. RAMON and AARON sing "CUE 20-CROSS TO BEAR". A few people begin to gather around to listen. AARON appears to be singing only to JING. STUDENTS return to listen.

AARON (CONT'D)

I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED TO ME
I FEEL IT FROM HEAD TO TOE
I'M WELL AWARE I DON'T HAVE A PRAYER
I SHOULD GIVE UP AND LET GO
I KNOW IT'S TRUE I DON'T HAVE A CLUE
I'M SO AT YOUR COMMAND
I CAN'T RESIST THE THRILL OF YOUR KISS
I THINK MY TIME IS AT HAND

JING abandons her post at the card table and begins to dance in front of the stage. The 4 students join her in the dancing.

I DON'T CARE
IT'S MY CROSS TO BEAR
WHAT'S LEFT OF MY HEART IS ON FIRE
I CAN'T STOP
WHEN YOU ARE ON TOP
THE OBJECT OF ALL MY DESIRE

JING and the STUDENTS stop dancing during the slow section of the song. AARON appears to be speaking/singing directly to JING.

WHEN WE'RE ALL ALONE
IN THE COMBAT ZONE
WITH YOUR EYES OF FIRE
AND YOUR SIREN CHOIR
WHEN I HEAR THEM SING
SUCH DELIGHT THEY BRING
BUT THEY WANT CONTROL
OF MY VERY SOUL

As the music becomes faster again JING and the STUDENTS resume dancing.

DOCTOR PLEASE
ABOUT MY DISEASE
THAT MAKES ME FEEL THIS WAY
COULD IT BE THE DEVIL IN ME
THEN THERE'S GONNA BE HELL TO PAY

I DON'T CARE
IT'S MY CROSS TO BEAR
WHAT'S LEFT OF MY HEART IS ON FIRE
I CAN'T STOP
WHEN YOU ARE ON TOP
THE OBJECT OF ALL MY DESIRE

Enthusiastic applause.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

Thanks everyone. Don't forget to check the table here for club information. We'll take a few minutes before our next song.

AARON comes down off the stage and over to JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to JING with a mischievous smile)

If you would wait right here, I have something for you.

AARON and the rest of the BAND quickly go to the van and bring forth another folding card table, checkered tablecloth, two white plates, silverware, a large candle, two chairs, napkins and cups. AARON brings over a picnic basket full of food and places it on the card table. DAVID places a large umbrella over the table. AARON places a small, beautifully wrapped package on JING'S plate. With all the essential features in place AARON walks over to JING and offers HER his hand.

JING

Thank you Aaron.

AARON escorts JING over to the new table. AARON pulls out the chair for JING to sit. JING is elated. AARON sits down. The BAND, without AARON, goes back to the stage and plays the instrumental "CUE 21-SPROUL PLAZA MUSIC". AARON pours wine from a plastic bottle into their glasses.

AARON

No alcohol on campus, so just to keep up appearances. And now for your dining pleasure, we have eggplant parmigiana from Giovanni's just down the street!

AARON dishes the eggplant.

JING

You are so sweet.

AARON points to the small box now next to JING'S plate.

AARON

Go ahead and open it.

JING smiles from head to toe and removes the silver ribbon and opens the package. It is a beautiful moonstone ring.

JING

Moonstone!

AARON

With a few diamonds for luck!

JING immediately puts it on.

JING

It fits perfectly!

AARON

Well, I did have a little help from Ling-si with the size.

JING throws her arms around AARON in appreciation.

JING

Thank you so much! Two gifts in just a few days. You certainly know how to spoil a girl!

AARON has trouble refocusing after such stimulating affection.

AARON

Oh. I actually can say something in Chinese! Okay, here goes. Buyong xie (You're welcome).

JING

Not bad. You are such a dear.

The BAND plays while JING and AARON eat and converse.

JING (CONT'D)

You did all this for me?

AARON

Of course. But I did have a little help from the boys.

JING

They love you, don't they? It's wonderful to see.

AARON

They're my family. My comrades.

(in a more serious tone)

After what happened the other night, I wasn't sure you'd come today. What was that all about with Yao?

JING

I'm getting the full court press from Mom and Dad. Be more Chinese. Kiss up to Yao.

JING looks intently at AARON.

JING (CONT'D)

I can't even begin to tell them about you.

AARON

What about what you want?

JING

It's my family. It's like this crazy balancing act. And Yao knows I'll catch hell for seeing you.

AARON

Just as long as he stays away from you.

JING

(tenderly)

Remember what you said at the night fair? About you and me?

AARON

Of course.

JING

Well, I feel the same way. So don't worry.

JING'S tone is now more serious.

JING (CONT'D)

But what about the draft? Have you decided what to do?

AARON'S face becomes clouded. His indecision and fear beginning to show.

AARON

I can't seem to bring myself to make a decision. I don't know if I can do it. I've even thought about Canada.

JING takes AARON'S hands.

AARON (CONT'D)

Does that mean I'm weak?

The conversation is abruptly shattered by a young female REPORTER who has just come onstage.

REPORTER

Hi you guys, I'm from the Daily Californian. I'd like to do a piece on your unique membership drive approach.

JING and AARON have trouble leaving their conversation.

AARON

Sure.

REPORTER

Do you mind if I take some photos?

AARON

Of course not.

The REPORTER surveys the lunch table and the BAND in amazement.

REPORTER

I wish my boyfriend would do this for me!

The REPORTER takes a few quick photos of JING and AARON and then moves towards the BAND for more

photos. JING and AARON go back to their conversation. The BAND, except for AARON, begins to load the musical gear back into the van.

JING

Any idea how long we have? Before you have to report for duty?

AARON

Still no word.

JING

Tell you what. Let's make the most of the time we have.

JING lifts HER glass of wine to toast.

JING (CONT'D)

To us! And the future.

AARON lifts his glass as well.

AARON

To us!

THEY toast.

JING

I can't tell you how much this all means to me. The ring and our Italian lunch. Xie xie (thank you).

AARON

Oh I know that one! That's thank you, right? How do you say "Anything for you" in Chinese?

JING just laughs. SCOTT and PAUL appear to be in pain as they haul their gear to the van. With hunched backs, they groan in feigned anguish as they labor under their loads. AARON and JING notice and smile.

AARON (CONT'D)

Gee, not very subtle are they? I should help out.

JING

Sorry, I've been keeping you all to myself!

JING and AARON stand and embrace. Fade to black. STUDENTS remove the scenery.

SCENE 8

Flash forward to present day. Early morning. The four STUDENTS bring a desk, chair, and computer onstage. A disheveled JOHN is in his robe sitting in front of the computer and working feverishly. HE works for a few moments by himself. SABRINA comes onstage dressed nicely for work. THEY sing “CUE 22-AREN’T YOU GOING TO WORK?”

SABRINA
AREN’T YOU GOING TO WORK?

JOHN ignores her question and continues to work.

JOHN
You were right about the Cal archives. I found all kinds of stuff! Photos. Articles.

SABRINA
SO WHAT ABOUT GOING TO WORK?

JOHN is absorbed with HIS search and answers flippantly.

JOHN
I have lots of sick days. Don’t worry.

SABRINA
OF COURSE I’M WORRIED
IT’S NOT RIGHT
YOU’RE MISSING WORK
AND UP ALL NIGHT
YOU’RE OBSESSED WITH THIS NEED TO KNOW
BUT YOU’RE GONNA HAVE TO LET IT GO

JOHN ignores SABRINA. HE is more serious now.

JOHN
I don’t think so. Check this. There was an anti-war rally in Chinatown.

*HE shows her on the computer screen.
Media screen displays the images.*

JOHN (CONT'D)

And guess who supplied the music!

SABRINA

Let's see.

SHE looks at the computer closely.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

It says he was a Cal student.

*SABRINA becomes more animated with the
discovery of this clue.*

SABRINA (CONT'D)

That's the connection! Check the Cal student newspaper.

JOHN

Good idea.

(pause)

And there's more. It says he spent some time in jail.

SABRINA

He's a criminal?

SCENE 9

Flashback to 1970 a few weeks later at Portsmouth Square. The split level arrangement is gone and a large stage has been constructed for the antiwar rally. STUDENTS remove the desk, chair, and computer. STUDENTS bring on a three foot riser, mic stands, five chairs for the dignitaries, podium for the speaker, and all the BAND equipment. Riser faces the audience. As soon as the riser and equipment are set up, the BAND begins to play “CUE 23-OVERDRIVE”. The STUDENTS continue to set up the remaining props while the BAND plays. All cast members not involved with the scene gather in front of the stage, along with the STUDENTS when they are finished setting up. There are lots of signs and banners. Large crowd. It's afternoon. Media screen shows anti-war messages and video clips. As soon as the set up is complete, the RALLY HOST and GEORGE HOFFMAN come on stage. HOFFMAN sits down, HOST goes to the podium. Psychedelic images appear when the music plays. The rally host talks while the BAND plays.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Good afternoon everyone. I'm Chai Ling, Chair of the Chinese-American Coalition Against the War. Thanks for coming out today. Only together can we make a difference in this world!

Cheering. OVERDRIVE ends.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST (CONT'D)

Today we have the distinguished professor from MIT George Hoffman. But first let's start with some music. Doing their latest hit, “**I Don't Want To Know**”, please welcome the Aaron Thomas Band. Aaron!

AARON, RAMON, and DAVID sing “CUE 24-I DON'T WANT TO KNOW”. During this time, JING is working her way to the front of the crowd to see AARON.

AARON

YOU GOT THAT LOOK, THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND YOU PRETEND YOU DON'T KNOW
 AND WHAT IT DOES, IS DRIVE ME WILD
 ONE LOOK I'M READY TO GO

AARON/RAMON

YOU HIT AND RUN, YOU'RE SUCH A TEASE
 BUT I CAN'T LET YOU GO
 SO IF IT'S TRUE, THAT YOU DON'T CARE
 THEN I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

AARON/RAMON/DAVID

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW
 I DON'T WANT TO KNOW
 I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

AARON

THAT ANGEL FACE
 THAT CALLS MY NAME
 AND YOU KNOW THAT IT'S TRUE
 YOU LET ME THINK
 I STAND A CHANCE
 BUT I KNOW I'M A FOOL

RAMON/DAVID

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

AARON/RAMON

SO GO AHEAD
 'CAUSE I DON'T MIND
 I'LL DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO
 'CAUSE IT'S YOUR LOVE
 THAT MAKES ME LIVE
 SO DON'T SAY
 THAT WERE THROUGH

DAVID

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

AARON/RAMON/DAVID

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW
 I DON'T WANT TO KNOW
 I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

DAVID

YOU GOT THAT LOOK, THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND WHAT IT DOES, IS DRIVE ME WILD
 YOU GOT THAT LOOK, THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND WHAT IT DOES, IS DRIVE ME WILD

DAVID (CONT'D)
 YOU GOT THAT LOOK
 THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND WHAT IT DOES
 IS DRIVE ME WILD

AARON/RAMON
 I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

YOU GOT THAT LOOK
 THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND WHAT IT DOES
 IS DRIVE ME WILD

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

YOU GOT THAT LOOK
 THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND WHAT IT DOES
 IS DRIVE ME WILD

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

YOU GOT THAT LOOK
 THAT LITTLE SMILE
 AND WHAT IT DOES
 IS DRIVE ME WILD

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW

*Applause. The BAND leaves the stage.
 HOST comes onstage.*

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Thank you Aaron! And now the distinguished professor from MIT...
 George Hoffman!

*Cheering. GEORGE HOFFMAN comes to
 the microphone.*

GEORGE HOFFMAN

(in a large, deliberate orators voice)

Thank you very much. Today the United States is being polarized by the anguish of war. The staggering loss of life. Senseless destruction. A government defying the will of its people. What can a man do in the face of such reckless genocide? Who will speak for the suffering and homeless? Who will speak for the dead who were no more than innocent pawns in a desperate game? There can be only one answer. There will always be only one answer. You, my friends, are the answer. Only you can reclaim the soul of America. If you don't change, then nothing will change. You must demand change. It is not enough to talk of justice. It is not enough to believe in freedom. You must be the vehicle for that change. Make no mistake, it is a dangerous path. Refusing to do the bidding of the warmongers means persecution and perhaps even worse. Yet, our path is clearly set before us. I speak as a citizen of the world as well as America when I say "Transform this world of misery and despair into a place of peace by first transforming yourself".

(MORE)

GEORGE HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Do not be corrupted by the dangerous arrogance of our imperialistic foreign policy. Do not fall victim to the dogs of war when you as peacemakers are denounced for lack of patriotism. The salvation of America from the wages of war is the culmination of true patriotism. America possesses the potential to effect staggering change for better in this world. The abolition of hunger, disease, war, and hatred are clearly within our grasp. Yet we fall far short of that potential, content to follow the paths of greed and hate, removing anything in our course that might impede our insatiable lust for power. For all our greatness, we squander our heritage of freedom and prosperity on the pursuit of self-gratification. What path will our nation's destiny take? You, my friends, are the answer. If you don't change, then nothing will change. So what can a man do in the face of such reckless power? At every opportunity he must defy the will of the oppressor. Rise above this malaise. He must transform himself and then transform the world. Thank you very much.

Flashes the peace sign. Applause. GEORGE HOFFMAN leaves the stage, waving. HOST and BAND come back onstage.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Thank you so much Professor Hoffman for those inspirational words! Words to live by! Alright, time for some more music from the AaronThomas Band. Aaron...

HOST leaves the stage. AARON steps up to the mic and speaks thoughtfully.

AARON

I was recently requested to report for active duty in the military. And like Professor Hoffman said, "Defy the will of the oppressor". I am here today to publicly announce my refusal to serve.

Cheering. JING is moved by all this and puts her hands to her face in admiration and concern. Cheering dies down.

AARON (CONT'D)

This was a hard decision for me. But as Frederick Douglass said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress".

(in a more somber tone)

I'd like to dedicate this next song to the one who helped me be the change I want to see.
Only she can see beyond my reflection.
Only she can see my soul.

AARON looks at JING. AARON sings "CUE 25-DO WHAT'S RIGHT".

AARON (CONT'D)

IF YOU WANT TO SAVE THE PLANET
GO RIGHT AHEAD
JUST REMEMBER CHEVRON AND WALL STREET
WOULD RATHER SEE YOU DEAD
EVERYBODY KNOWS
YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW
SO DO WHAT'S RIGHT INSTEAD

I USED TO THINK THAT I WAS A FOOL
TO TRY TO STOP THE MACHINE
ALL IT TAKES IS YOU AND ME
'CAUSE WAR IS TRULY OBSCENE
IF I DON'T STAND UP AND DO WHAT'S RIGHT
IF I GO DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT
THERE'S NOBODY LEFT FOR ME TO BLAME

IF YOU WANT TO STOP WAR AND MADNESS
GO RIGHT AHEAD
JUST REMEMBER NIXON AND WALL STREET
WOULD RATHER SEE YOU DEAD
EVERYBODY KNOWS
KILLING PEOPLE BLOWS
SO DO WHAT'S RIGHT INSTEAD

I USED TO THINK THAT I REALLY LIVED
IN THE LAND OF THE FREE
BUT MONEY BUYS WHATEVER YOU WANT
INCLUDING WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE
I FINALLY NOTICED THAT I WAS THE FOOL
IF YOU HAVE MONEY THEN YOU MAKE THE RULES
BUT THERE'S ONE THING THEY CAN'T BUY
AND THAT'S YOU AND ME

IF YOU WANT TO SAVE THE PLANET
AND PUT AN END TO WAR
JUST REMEMBER ARCO AND WALL STREET
ARE BIG MONEY'S WHORE
EVERYBODY KNOWS
YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW

Applause and cheering.

AARON (CONT'D)

(now speaking)

Thank you so much!

HOST comes onstage. The BAND remains onstage.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Thank you Aaron Thomas Band. Inspiring words and music! And thanks again to our illustrious speaker George Hoffman. Peace!

HOST leaves the stage. The BAND congratulates AARON. The BAND starts to pack up. AARON motions for JING to come up onstage. SHE comes up onstage and immediately hugs AARON. CROWD leaves the stage.

JING

(amazed)

I can't believe what I just heard.

JING kisses AARON.

JING (CONT'D)

You were amazing! Did you mean what you said?

AARON

I think so.

(pause)

You know, I didn't even plan to say anything. But after Hoffman spoke, it just kind of came out.

JING

I'm so proud of you.

(concerned)

You know it's not going to be easy.

AARON

That's what I'm afraid of. I hope I'm doing the right thing. I'm seriously panicked about all this.

JING

Remember what we said? About matters of conscience? You just said it yourself. Do what's right.

AARON nods his head slowly.

JING (CONT'D)

I have faith in you.

JING takes AARON'S hands.

JING (CONT'D)

(tenderly)

So what happens now?

AARON

I'll probably have a hearing and spend a couple of years in prison.

JING

That's not what I meant. What happens to you and me?

AARON

(thoughtfully)

It would be selfish for me to ask you to wait. So I would understand if...

JING interrupts.

JING

(smiling)

Don't be stupid.

AARON

Who would do poetry for me?

JING

I always will.

AARON hugs JING and smiles.

JING (CONT'D)

Are you hungry?

AARON

Sure.

JING

Let's stop by my house for some Chinese.

AARON

(smiling)
Dying man's last request.

JING

And don't worry. My parents are gone tonight.

AARON

Ling-si won't be happy.

JING

Leave Ling-si to me.

AARON

Let me get my stuff.

AARON puts his guitar in HIS case, picks it up, and walks off stage with JING.

JING

Sure, Mr. Rock Star.

SCENE 10

STUDENTS clear the stage. PO family APARTMENT AND SHOP that same evening after the rally. We return to the split level stage arrangement. The apartment, shop, and JING'S room are all visible by the audience. AARON and JING enter the shop via the back door and head up the stairs to the apartment. The shop is closed for the evening. AARON is carrying his guitar case. THEY enter the apartment hand in hand.

AARON

Hi Ling-si.

LING-SI comes out of the kitchen drying a plate. SHE has been washing and drying the dishes.

LING-SI

(surprised)

Hi Aaron.

(to JING, under her breath)

What are you doing? Mom and Dad would freak if they knew he was here! Did anyone see you?

JING

We came in the back door.

LING-SI

(worried)

If anyone saw you, we know who they'd call. Your favorite obsessed tutor.

LING-SI heads back to the kitchen and the dishes. AARON takes his guitar out of his case and starts to tune. HE sits in a chair in the living room. JING goes to the kitchen and starts preparing food.

JING

(to LING-SI)

Ask Mr. Rock Star here what happened at the rally.

LING-SI
 (to AARON)
 How did it go?

AARON
 I decided not to serve.

JING
 In front of 2,000 people!

LING-SI
 (concerned)
 Really?

AARON
 I had to choose. Do what's right...

LING-SI
 You're a brave man, Aaron Thomas.

AARON
 Not really.

JING
 (to LING-SI, with JING beaming)
 He is wonderful, isn't he?

AARON
 Jing, do you mind if I show you this new song?

JING
 Of course not.

AARON
 It kind of came to me after we talked the other night. No title yet.

AARON sings "CUE 26-AARON'S MIRROR". LING-SI listens carefully, with a new respect for AARON.

AARON (CONT'D)
 WHO'S THAT IN THE MIRROR
 IS THAT REALLY ME
 NO ONE KNOWS THE PERSON
 THAT I'VE COME TO BE
 SOMETIMES IT JUST HAPPENS
 LIFE WILL MAKE YOU CHOOSE

NOW I KNOW, TO LET IT GO
THE LIFE I JUST OUTGREW

THEY CAN'T MAKE ME SOMEONE
I REFUSE TO BE
GLAD TO SAY
I'M JUST NOT THAT WAY

ONLY LOVE WILL MAKE YOU
BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE
NOW I SEE THE ANSWER
RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME
JUST AROUND THE CORNER
THROUGH THAT OPEN DOOR
THERE'S THE KEY
CALLING ME
TO WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR

LING-SI

Very nice. May be you should call it "Aaron's Mirror."

JING

(almost speechless)

Wonderful.

LING-SI

(to JING so AARON can't hear, smiling)

Are you guys in love or what?

*JING can only nod, having forgotten entirely
why she was in the kitchen.*

LING-SI (CONT'D)

Food! Remember?

JING picks of two plates of chow mein.

JING

Follow me, I have to show you where I wrote Shimmer.

AARON

Sure.

AARON grabs his guitar, puts it in the case, and THEY head to the roof. LING-SI watches THEM ascend the stairs as SHE dries a dish. There is a beautiful view of the city from the top. Lots of city lights. There are a few old chairs, a small table, a futon, and a sofa scattered around. JING puts the food down on the small table. THEY stand and admire the view.

AARON (CONT'D)

What a great view. Summertime in San Francisco. I love this city.

JING

This is my escape.

JING takes AARON'S arm.

AARON

I only wish we could escape up here.

JING

If only.

THEY go to the sofa and sit. AARON takes his guitar out of his case. AARON plays his guitar as THEY sing. AARON and JING sing "CUE 27-ALL MY LIFE"

AARON/JING

I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL MY LIFE
WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN
SOMEONE TO MAKE IT RIGHT
I'M OVERDUE FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU
BUT LOVE DOESN'T KNOW MY NAME
I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL MY LIFE
SOMETHING HAS FINALLY HAPPENED
IT MIGHT JUST BE TONIGHT
IT HAS TO BE TONIGHT

Start "CUE 28-ROOFTOP MUSIC" a few moments after the previous cue ends. AARON nods and leans over his guitar to kiss JING. SHE leans towards him and gets her long hair caught on the strings.

THEY laugh as THEY extricate JING. THEY continue kissing but without the guitar. THEY move to the futon and start to make love. Cut to the Po family apartment below. LING-SI works in the kitchen while JING and AARON continue to make love. Wait until cue finishes before YAO knocks loudly on the door. LINGSI walks to the door.

LING-SI

(trying to be calm)

Yes, who is it?

YAO

(in a forceful voice)

It's Yao! Open the door please.

LING-SI

(panicked)

Uh, just a moment. Let me get something on.

LING-SI runs up the stairs to the roof. YAO continues to knock. Cut to the rooftop.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

You guys! Yao's at the door! I'll try to stall him! I suggest you get dressed!!

JING

(panicked)

Not good. This guy is relentless.

THEY struggle to get dressed quickly.

AARON

Don't worry. There'll be another time.

After a brief but passionate kiss, AARON quickly puts his guitar in the case and goes down the fire escape to the street. JING heads downstairs. LINGSI is already at the front door. YAO is pounding louder and louder. Cut to the PO family apartment.

YAO

Open the door!

LING-SI
Just a minute!

JING
(to LING-SI)
Don't open it.

LING-SI
He sounds seriously miffed.

YAO opens the door with his key and marches through.

YAO
(animated)
Where is he?

LING-SI
(afraid of YAO)
Master Yao. Please, you should not be here.

JING
(furious)
Get the hell out of my house!

YAO charges up the stairs to the rooftop and bursts through the door only to find the roof empty. JING and LING-SI follow behind him up to the roof.

YAO
Looks like someone left in a hurry.

JING
I'm calling the cops.

JING starts to head downstairs, YAO intercepts HER and grabs HER by the wrist in anger.

YAO
Then perhaps I should inform your parents of your little get together tonight.

JING stops walking. YAO now realizes he has some leverage over JING with this discovery.

YAO (CONT'D)

And your American friend.

YAO releases JING. YAO begins to relax and sits down confidently on the sofa. HE speaks more slowly now.

YAO (CONT'D)

(with an almost smug tone)

I know about your anti-war musician friend. Aaron is his name? But before you do anything rash, let me make a suggestion. I would do what your parents say, if you want to keep the shop. Understand? Ji zhu ni zi ji shi shei. And remember, you are Chinese, not American. Ming bai le ma? (Do you understand)

JING and LING-SI are speechless and don't respond.

YAO (CONT'D)

Good. I think I know the way out. Good night ladies. Wan shang hao. (Good night)

Lights come down. LING-SI goes to the shop. JING goes to her room. MR. and MRS. PO go to the apartment.

11

SCENE 11

11

PO family APARTMENT AND SHOP the next day. LING-SI is working in the shop. JING is in her room. MR. PO and MRS. PO are in the apartment reading. YAO enters the shop. THEY sing "CUE 29-NI HAO LING-SI".

YAO

NI HAO LING-SI
HOW ARE YOU?

LING-SI

I'M FINE MASTER YAO, HERE FOR THE RENT?

YAO

NO, NOT TODAY
THERE'S MUCH TO SAY
ARE YOUR PARENTS UPSTAIRS?

LING-SI nods. YAO goes up the stairs to the apartment and knocks. MRS. PO answers.

MRS. PO

NI HAO MA MASTER YAO? (HOW ARE YOU?)

YAO

HEN HAO XIE XIE NI (FINE THANK YOU)

MRS. PO

PLEASE COME IN, HAVE SOME TEA?

*YAO enters and sits down with MR. PO.
THEY all bow.*

YAO

YES, THANK YOU SO MUCH

MRS. PO goes to the kitchen. MR. PO and YAO sit down.

YAO (CONT'D)

AS YOU KNOW I'M FOND OF JING
AND I'M GLAD TO HELP
SHE'S GETTING MUCH BETTER

MRS. PO

(from the kitchen)

SHE FORGETS THAT SHE'S CHINESE!

YAO

I HAVE A SUGGESTION
TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK
MY A ROLE AS A TUTOR
MIGHT BE SOMETHING MORE

MRS. PO

(animatedly)

A MARRIAGE!
ARRANGE A MARRIAGE!

YAO

MY BANK ACCOUNT COULD REALLY HELP THE STORE

*HE laughs slightly. MRS. PO comes back
from the kitchen with the tea.*

MR. PO

(to MRS. PO)

YOU THINK JING WOULD DO THIS?
I'M NOT SURE
SHE'S JUST LIKE HER MOTHER
STUBBORN AND PROUD

MRS. PO looks at MR. PO indignantly.

MR. PO (CONT'D)

THEY DON'T DO THIS
NOT IN THE U.S.

YAO

I THINK THAT JING IS FAR MORE WILLING NOW
LET ME OFFER SOMETHING ELSE
FOR BOTH OF YOU
IF JING WILL CONSENT TO THIS
AND SEE IT THROUGH
SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO STRUGGLE
LIKE ALL THOSE YEARS BEFORE

I WILL GIVE THE PO FAMILY
THE APARTMENT AND THIS STORE

MR. and MRS. PO are stunned. THEY look at each other. There is a pause before THEY speak again.

MRS. PO

How very generous Master Yao!

MRS. PO bows deeply.

YAO

As a token of my gratitude, as well as an opportunity to solve your financial problems.

MR. PO

We are truly honored by your kind offer.

MRS. PO

We will speak to Jing.

YAO stands up.

YAO

Very good. Thank you for the tea.

MR. and MRS. PO stand and bow. MRS. PO walks YAO to the door.

MRS. PO

Zai jian. (good bye)

YAO walks down the stairs to the shop with MRS. PO. MR. PO shakes his head in confusion, sits back down on the sofa and reads his newspaper.

YAO

(to LING-SI upon reaching the shop)

Say hello to Jing.

(in a slightly intimidating tone)

Tell her not to forget.

(pause)

About the guzheng.

LING-SI nods. YAO leaves the shop. LING-SI goes upstairs to the living room. Cut to the apartment upstairs.

MRS. PO

(calling to JING)

Jing! Jing come down here please!

JING comes from her room down to the shop.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

YAO WAS JUST HERE
YOU WON'T BELIEVE
WHAT HE JUST SAID
HE'LL GIVE US THE BUILDING
BUT THERE'S A CATCH
HE WANTS TO MARRY YOU!
THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

JING

(in disbelief)

What?

MRS. PO

I THINK YOU TWO WILL MAKE A REAL FINE MATCH

LING-SI

(defending HER sister)

Are you joking?

JING

(starting to anger)

SO SELL ME OFF
AND KEEP THE SHOP
IS THAT IT?
YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT YOURSELF
YOU DON'T GIVE A SHIT!

LING-SI

YAO'S NOT FOR HER

MRS. PO

(shouting in anger)

Who would you prefer?

WITHOUT HIM WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE

LING-SI comes over and puts her arms around JING.

JING
PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS

MRS. PO
I STILL KNOW WHAT'S BEST

LING-SI
DON'T SACRIFICE YOUR DAUGHTER
TO SOMEONE SHE DETESTS

MRS. PO
AS LONG AS YOU'RE MY DAUGHTER
I'LL SAY WHAT YOU DO

JING
NO, I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT

LING-SI
IT'S WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU

JING runs to her room followed by LING-SI. JING throws herself on her bed. LING-SI comforts her SISTER. Cut to JING'S room. Lights come down on the shop and apartment living room. Only JING'S room is lit. MRS. PO goes back to reading with MR. PO.

LING-SI (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

LING-SI strokes her SISTER'S hair as SHE cries softly.

JING
I can't believe they would do this to me.

LING-SI
I'll talk to Dad. Maybe he can figure out something.

JING
Maybe. But what about the shop?

LING-SI

You have a life too. And what about Aaron?

JING can't respond. LING-SI hugs her sister and then leaves the stage. JING stands and sings "CUE 30-JING'S MIRROR"

JING

WHO'S THAT IN THE MIRROR
IS THAT REALLY ME?
NO ONE KNOWS THE PERSON
THAT I'VE COME TO BE

ALWAYS DISAPPOINTED
THEY'RE NEVER SATISFIED
ON MY OWN, ALL ALONE
I'M LATE FOR THE SKY

THEY CAN'T MAKE ME SOMEONE
I DON'T WANNA BE
NOT THAT GUY
I WOULD RATHER DIE

ALWAYS WHAT THEY WANTED
NEVER WHAT I NEED
LOVE IS STILL THE ANSWER
IF WE WERE ONLY FREE

JUST AROUND THE CORNER
THROUGH THAT OPEN DOOR
THERE'S THE KEY
CALLING ME
TO WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR

*JING falls down on her bed in despair.
Lights comedown on JING'S room and rise
on the apartment living room. Cut to the PO
apartment where MR. and MRS. PO are
standing. THEY sing "CUE 31-ARE YOU
SURE?"*

MR. PO

ARE YOU SURE
THAT THIS IS RIGHT FOR HER?

MRS. PO

WHAT'S RIGHT FOR JING?

(sarcastically)

Really?

WOULD YOU RATHER LOSE EVERYTHING?

MR. PO

IT'S NOT THAT BAD

IT'S NOT THE WORST WE'VE HAD

MRS. PO

WE CAN'T GO FOR LONG

OUR STOCK IS ALMOST GONE

MRS. PO throws her hands up in frustration.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Without Yao, we lose it all!

MR. PO

SO WE'RE HARD-PRESSED

MRS. PO

TRUST ME I KNOW WHAT'S BEST

HOW WE'LL SURVIVE

AND KEEP THIS SHOP ALIVE

MR. PO

WE MAY BE PAST OUR PRIME

THINGS WILL IMPROVE WITH TIME

MRS. PO

WILL YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE?

MR. PO

Yes, for Jing's sake.

MRS. PO

It's a fool's gamble.

MR. PO

DID YOU SEE ALL THE PAIN IN HER FACE?

MRS. PO is oblivious to MR. PO'S pleading.

MRS. PO

She'll be fine with Yao.

MR. PO

I CAN FEEL ALL THE PAIN IN HER FACE

MRS. PO

I wasn't happy with you either. At first.

MR. PO

WHAT WOULD YOU DO
IF IT WERE YOU
IN HER PLACE?

*MRS. PO dismisses MR. PO'S concern with
a quick wave of her hand.*

MRS. PO

This will all work out.

MR. PO

I hope.

Lights come down.

12

SCENE 12

12

The next day. AARON is waiting impatiently on a bench by the Goddess of Democracy statue in Portsmouth Square. STUDENTS bring on a the GODDESS OF DEMOCRACY statue and place a bench just in front of it. The lights on the PO shop and apartment come down with just a spot on JING and AARON. JING enters the stage quickly. AARON stands. SHE rushes up to AARON and takes his hands. THEY sing “CUE 32-YOU WON’T BELIEVE WHAT’S HAPPENED”.

JING

YOU WON’T BELIEVE WHAT’S HAPPENED

AARON

I’VE GOT NEWS TOO

JING

I’M SUPPOSED TO MARRY YAO

AARON

What?

I HOPE YOU REFUSED

JING

I WON’T THROW MY LIFE AWAY
NO MATTER WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

AARON

IT’S YOUR LIFE
YOU’VE GOT TO BE FREE
YOU BELONG RIGHT HERE WITH ME

TOMORROW THEY COME GET ME

JING

WE STILL HAVE TODAY

AARON

PROMISE THAT YOU’LL VISIT

JING

THEY CAN'T KEEP ME AWAY

AARON/JING

WE BOTH HAVE OUR JOB TO DO

I'LL STILL BE HERE WHEN ALL THIS IS THROUGH LIFE WILL MAKE YOU
CHOOSE

WE'RE BOTH THE SAME, ME AND YOU

JING and AARON sit down on the bench.

JING

It won't be long.

AARON

But two years?

JING

We can do it. You'll see.

AARON

Just tell me not to worry.

JING

What can happen?

AARON

I guess you're right.

JING

Of course I am.

AARON

At least you'll be free.

JING

Free to wait for you.

AARON

DON'T FORGET ME WHEN I'VE GONE AWAY

JING

DON'T WORRY IT WILL ALL BE OKAY

AARON/JING

I'VE WAITED ALL OF MY LIFE
FOR SOMEONE TO MAKE IT RIGHT

JING

I love you so.

THEY embrace. Fade to black.

Flash forward to the present day. Midday. PO shop and apartment remain unlit. STUDENTS remove the statue and bench. STUDENTS bring on six desks, six chairs, and two computers. After setting up, the STUDENTS sit at the desks and appear to be studying. JOHN and SABRINA are in the beautiful San Francisco Public Library. THEY are both staring intently at their respective computers. THEY are surrounded by four STUDENTS who are studying quietly at their desks.

JOHN

Sabrina! I found it!

All four STUDENTS glare at JOHN for talking too loudly.

STUDENT NO. 1

Shhh!

JOHN

(softly)

Sorry.

SABRINA comes over to JOHN'S computer.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(now softly to SABRINA. The conversation gradually gets louder)

Check it out!

JOHN points to the computer. Media screen shows the image of AARON in an orange jumpsuit.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Aaron Thomas spent time in jail alright. For refusing to go to Vietnam. He's not a criminal, he's a hero! I knew it!

STUDENTS all turn again and reprimand JOHN and SABRINA for talking too loudly.

STUDENT NO. 2/STUDENT NO. 1

Shhh!

STUDENT NO. 3/STUDENT NO. 4

Please.

SABRINA

(softly but excitedly)

That's the connection! Vietnam and Berkeley! I'll check the Cal anti-war groups.

THEY both rush back to SABRINA'S computer. SHE sits down and begins to work quickly. JOHN stands behind HER and watches over HER shoulder. Media screen continues to show the images.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

What anti-war groups did they have back then?

JOHN

Try SDS.

SABRINA

What's that?

JOHN

Students for a democratic society.

THEY search quickly. The passing images display on the media screen until SABRINA stops on a specific image of both AARON and JING together at Cal.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(loudly)

Holy shit!

All the STUDENTS turn for a final time and reprimand JOHN and SABRINA more adamantly

STUDENT NO. 1/STUDENT NO.2

Hey!

STUDENT NO. 3/STUDENT NO. 4

Shhh!!

JOHN

(softly but very excitedly)

There they are.

SABRINA

We finally have a name. Jing Po.

JOHN

(excitedly but quietly)

Check Chinatown for Po families.

SABRINA

Right.

*SHE searches quickly for a few moments.
Media screen displays the white pages of the
phone book. There are many Po names.
SABRINA stops when SHE gets to the page
with the Po names.*

SABRINA (CONT'D)

(in dismay)

There must be almost 100.

JOHN

Somebody in Chinatown must know about this.

*Fade to black. STUDENTS remove the
tables, desks, and computers.*

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Flashback to 1970, a number of weeks later than the previous 1970 scene. While the students are clearing the stage OLD LING-SI walks thoughtfully onstage in a solo spot. The stage is empty and dark.

OLD LING-SI

I remember something called the “cascade effect” from my chemistry class years ago, where something unforeseen triggers an unexpected chain of events. That is exactly what happened on an October day in 1970. Even though it was years ago, I remember it with painful clarity. It was on that pivotal October day where my life and Jing's changed forever. We started out just before 9AM on a cold, blustery day, having told our parents of our intention to go to the Chinatown branch library on Powell.

JING and LING-SI enter the stage and begin to walk around. A spot follows THEM. Media screen shows THEM walking the streets of Chinatown.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

We walked west on Clay past Gordon Lau Elementary where we both went to school. We stopped and peered through the chain link fence at the children playing.

JING and LING-SI stop and look at the imaginary schoolyard where the children are playing. JING has a distant look on her face. LING-SI points at the imaginary children.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

My sister set a leisurely pace as we window shopped and then stopped for a quick green tea.

JING and LING-SI begin to walk again. STUDENT No. 1 and STUDENT No. 2 bring cups of tea to LING-SI and JING. The four STUDENTS bring on a bench and an arched arbor with the name “Woh Hei Yuen Park”. They place them at center stage.

JING

Let's sit for a while. And thanks for coming with me. I love my big sister.

THEY walk through the arbor. JING hugs LING-SI. JING and LING-SI sit down on the bench.

OLD LING-SI

In retrospect, I can see Jing was avoiding what she already knew to be true. This was a short-lived moment of tranquility before the storm. Still, I'm glad I was there to help. The park was filled with mothers with their toddlers and elderly men with their newspapers, the beautifully trellised wisteria blooming in profusion. In Chinese, Woh Hei Yuen means "Garden of Peace and Joy." I was struck by the irony of the situation, my melancholic sister sipping tea in this lovely place. Hardly peace and joy.

STUDENTS No. 1 and No. 2 quickly come onstage to take the tea cups from LING-SI and JING. JING and LING-SI begin to walk again. STUDENTS No. 3 and No. 4 remove the arbor and replace it with a building facade that reads "Chinatown Health Center". The bench remains. JING approaches the health center door slowly with trepidation. JING charges through the health center doors followed by LING-SI. THEY cannot be seen behind the door. Media screen goes dark. After a few moments JING comes charging out the health center door and sits down on the bench. LING-SI follows her out. SHE is distraught. LING-SI and JING sing "CUE 33-CLINIC". Spot fades on OLD LING-SI as she walks off stage.

JING

(in a panic)

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS
TELL ME WHAT JUST HAPPENED THERE

LING-SI puts her arm around JING.

LING-SI

YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW

JING

I'M GLAD YOU'RE WITH ME
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CARES

LING-SI
AFTER ALL WE'RE BOTH PO'S

JING stands up and walks around in frustration. LING-SI gets up and follows her.

JING
TWO MORE YEARS
NOW THIS AND WHILE AARON'S NOT HERE
NOW IT'S NOT JUST ME
BUT THIS IS NOT HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE

LING-SI takes JING'S hands and tries to calm JING.

LING-SI
I know this wasn't exactly the plan. But things will work out. Somehow.

Starting to panic, JING breaks away from LING-SI and walks nervously.

JING
Work out? Everything will hit the fan when they find out. Family dishonor. Yao and the shop. I can just hear it now.

JING pauses to think.

JING (CONT'D)
And Aaron! My God.

LING-SI comes over to JING and puts HER hands on JING's shoulders. LING-SI looks straight into JING'S eyes.

LING-SI
(with authority)
Listen to your big sister. We will get through this together. You and me. Understand?

JING nods reluctantly.

LING-SI (CONT'D)
NO NEED TO PANIC
REMEMBER THAT YOU STILL HAVE ME

JING
I LOVE YOU SO

JING hugs LING-SI.

LING-SI

THIS WON'T BE EASY
YOU'LL START TO SHOW EVENTUALLY

JING

THEY'LL FREAK WHEN THEY KNOW

THEY both move back to the bench and sit.

LING-SI

YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY
NO ONE NEEDS TO KNOW RIGHT AWAY

JING

I HOPE I KNOW WHAT TO DO

LING-SI

WHAT'S BEST FOR THE BABY AND YOU

JING

AT LEAST I HAVE AARON AND YOU

LING-SI

I'LL BE HERE TO SEE THIS THROUGH

JING

I HOPE I KNOW WHAT TO DO

LING-SI

WHAT'S BEST FOR THE BABY AND YOU

JING/LING-SI

AARON NEEDS TO BE HERE TOO

JING puts her head in HER hands. LING-SI holds JING in her arms as the lights slowly come down. STUDENTS remove the bench and building facade.

SCENE 15

A few months later. STUDENTS bring on the scenery. At the floor level the stage is split into AARON'S jail cell on stage right and the PO family shop on stage left. Above is the PO family apartment and JING'S room. During this entire scene all four areas (cell, JING'S room, shop, and PO apartment) are visible to the audience. The action jumps from area to area. JING and LING-SI are in JING'S room. Media screen shows AARON, dressed in a prison jump suit, being led away and writing letters in his cell. MR. and MRS. PO are reading in the apartment living room. The action starts in AARON'S cell. NICK, the guard, brings a guitar to AARON'S cell. LING-SI kisses JING on the head, leaves her room and goes to the shop. When the STUDENTS finish setting up THEY go by AARON'S cell, each one giving HIM a knuckle bump.

NICK

Hey Aaron, I got something for you.

NICK unlocks the cell, hands AARON the guitar. HE is ecstatic.

AARON

Thanks Nick. I can't tell you how much this means to me!

NICK

Just don't keep everybody up.

AARON sits down and starts playing the opening bars of the guitar part of Robert Johnson's Crossroads a la Eric Clapton. AARON plays "CUE 34-CROSSROADS". NICK watches in amazement.

NICK (CONT'D)

Not bad for a white boy!

NICK and AARON both laugh. AARON suddenly puts the guitar down in frustration as a shadow of concern comes across his face.

NICK (CONT'D)

Let me guess, there's a girl.

AARON

(in frustration)

I just need to be out of here.

NICK

You chose to be here son.

AARON

I need to talk to her.

NICK

Not a lot you can do from here. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.

AARON

I know. When I'm out of here, things will be fine.

NICK puts his hands on AARON'S shoulders.

NICK

There you go.

AARON picks up his guitar and starts playing. AARON plays "CUE 35-SEND YOU MY LOVE CHORDS".

NICK (CONT'D)

That's the right idea.

NICK shuts the cell door and leaves the stage. MR. and MRS. PO are still reading in the living room. Media screen shows AARON and JING at the night fair. AARON puts down his guitar then stands up looking up at JING'S room. Action shifts to JING'S room as she sings "CUE 36-WITHOUT YOU".

JING

SING ME A LOVE SONG
I'LL PRETEND THAT YOU'RE HERE
TO MAKE ALL THIS GO AWAY
BUT IT'S NEVER THAT EASY
WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH TO LOSE
AND I'M THE PRICE THEY HAVE TO PAY

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT
THAT THIS COULD HAPPEN TO ME
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT
I JUST WANT US BOTH TO BE FREE
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
SING THE SAME OLD SONG
PRETEND THAT NOTHING'S WRONG
OR MAYBE FACE THE FACT THAT WE CAN'T GO BACK
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
WITHOUT YOU

ANY FOOL CAN TELL YOU
NOTHING'S AS SWEET OH NO
UNTIL IT SLIPS RIGHT THROUGH YOUR HANDS
IT'S ALWAYS WHAT THEY WANTED
AND NEVER WHAT I REALLY NEED
AND ONLY NOW I UNDERSTAND

ONE DAY AT A TIME NOW
BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME
I JUST WISH I COULD SEE YOUR FACE
THERE'S NO MORE LOVE SONGS
WITH THE MOON IN THE SKY
IT'S LIKE YOU DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT
THAT THIS CAN KEEP US APART
I WON'T BELIEVE IT
BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS HOLE IN MY HEART
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
SING THE SAME OLD SONG
PRETEND THAT NOTHING'S WRONG
OR MAYBE FACE THE FACT
THAT WE CAN'T GO BACK
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO
WITHOUT YOU

JING slowly walks to the living room of the apartment.

JING (CONT'D)

(to her parents, with her head down)

Mom. Dad. I have something to say.

Media screen goes dark. Lighting for JING'S room, the shop, and the living room fades to black. AARON'S cell is removed by the STUDENTS while the PO shop remains onstage but unlit.

A few days later at the prison. STUDENTS bring scenery onstage. JING visits AARON. Lights come up on the wire mesh screen in the prison visiting area. There is a chair on either side. AARON and JING are not onstage yet. OLD LING-SI comes to the front of the stage immediately in an animated manner while the STUDENTS bring on the scenery.

OLD LING-SI

It was an all too accurate assessment when I predicted that my sister's pregnancy would change everything. It is a conversation I shall never forget. Perhaps conversation isn't the most precise description for what happened. It was a vile thirty-minute rant by my mother. Of course my mother had no concern for the health and welfare of her daughter; she was consumed with worry about how Yao would react to the news. Not to mention the effect on business and what the neighbors would say. My father, on the other hand, had only Jing's welfare in mind. He patiently asked about the father, the due date, and what kind of plans she had made for raising a child. You could see the disappointment in his face but he never said an unkind word or raised his voice. Throughout my mother's tirade, Jing sat patiently in her chair, her eyes down. She spoke just once, only to say she was sorry. Instead of informing Yao immediately of Jing's pregnancy, my mother deliberately delayed. "Let him get used to the idea of marrying her", I believe she said. I suppose he would be less likely to revoke his offer. Of course, he would probably be infinitely more angry when he eventually did discover the truth. And the fact that my mother had purposely hidden it from him. The threat of marriage with Yao would hangover Jing like a dark cloud.

AARON comes onstage in an orange jumpsuit and paces while he waits for JING. NICK accompanies him and waits nearby. OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. JING comes onstage and rushes to AARON. Standing, THEY put THEIR hands on the screen together. THEY sing "CUE 37-PRISON". NICK smiles to himself at the young lovers' tender moment.

AARON

I FINALLY GET TO SEE YOU

JING

I'VE MISSED YOU SO
IT SEEMS LIKE FOREVER

AARON

THE DAYS PASS SO SLOW
I'D DREAM OF YOUR SWEET FACE EACH DAY
AND ALL THIS WOULD JUST GO AWAY

JING

NOTHING IS THE SAME WITHOUT YOU
MY LIFE'S A PRISON JUST LIKE YOURS TOO

AARON

SOMEHOW YOU LOOK DIFFERENT
YOU LOOK SO ALIVE
YOU'RE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER
WITH A LIGHT FROM INSIDE

JING

IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU
IF YOU ONLY KNEW
I NEED YOU MORE NOW THAN BEFORE
NOW THERE'S SOMETHING WE CAN'T IGNORE

AARON

What do you mean?

THEY both sit down on opposite sides of the screen.

AARON (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

JING

I'm fine. More than just fine.

AARON doesn't understand and shakes HIS head.

AARON

It's all because of me?

JING

(smiles knowingly)

Oh yes.

AARON

If I only knew what? Help me here.

JING

EVERYTHING HAS HAPPENED SO FAST
I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START
TELL ME THAT YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MINE
PROMISE ME WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART

AARON

Of course.

JING

REMEMBER THAT NIGHT ON THE ROOF?
THE MOONLIT SKY, JUST YOU AND ME

AARON

THAT IMAGE IS FIXED IN MY MIND
IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT KEEPS ME FREE

JING

I KNOW THIS WILL BE HARD TO HEAR
ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU'RE NOT FREE
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL WE HAVE TO DO
WE'RE NOW A FAMILY, ONE, TWO, THREE

*JING stands up slowly and puts her hand
gently on her stomach. AARON stands up in
astonishment. THEY put THEIR hands on
the screen together again.*

AARON

Oh my God!

I CAN'T EVEN HELP YOU.
DO YOU FEEL ALRIGHT?

JING

I'M FINE, NO NEED TO WORRY
BUT WE'RE IN FOR A FIGHT

AARON

YOUR PARENTS WILL WANT ME DEAD

JING

WE'RE STILL A FAMILY LIKE I JUST SAID

AARON
THIS IS NOT HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE

JING
JUST REMEMBER YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE ME

AARON
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

JING
DO THE BEST I CAN JUST LIKE YOU
WHEN YOU'RE OUT
THINGS WILL BE FINE
WE'LL BE TOGETHER JUST LIKE OLD TIMES
Nothing will stop us.

AARON
Promise?

JING nods.

JING
Not even my parents.

AARON
The Yao thing?

JING
I swear that will never happen. I would rather die.

AARON
(in frustration)
But I can't be there for you. I just need to be out of here.

JING
You will. Then you belong to me.

JING pauses and touches her stomach.
I mean us.

JING and AARON rest their heads on the screen opposite each other as the lights slowly fade to black.

*EVERYONE leaves the stage. STUDENTS
remove the prison scenery.*

SCENE 17

A few months later. Same scenery. AARON is reading a letter from JING in his cell. JING is in her room writing a letter. The lights come up on AARON'S cell and JING'S room. NICK approaches AARON'S cell.

NICK

You alright son?

AARON hands the letter to NICK. HE reads the letter intently.

AARON

She's due in a couple of months. What if she forgets me?

NICK

Don't tear yourself up kid. Not much you can do from here.

AARON

I know. When I'm out of here, things will be fine.

NICK

That they will, that they will. And have a little faith young man! I've been around a while, I've learned a thing or two about people. Especially working here. I saw they way Jing looked at you. That, my friend, says it all. Give her a little credit!

AARON

I just can't help but think about it.

NICK

(smiling)

Well, even I know that music will take your mind off of things. So why do I always have to tell you to get to it?

NICK picks up AARON'S guitar and hands it to him, as well as the letter.

AARON

Good thing I have you around, that's all I can say!

AARON reluctantly picks up the guitar. NICK leaves the stage. JING stands up and looks out towards the audience.

Media screen shows AARON and JING at the night fair. AARON and JING sing “CUE 38-SEND YOU MY LOVE”. AARON plays along with the song.

AARON (CONT'D)

IT'S BEEN SO LONG
SO LONG I CAN'T REMEMBER
IT'S BEEN SO LONG
SINCE I'VE SEEN YOUR SHINING FACE
YOUR TENDER HEART
THAT SHATTERED INTO PIECES
THAT DAY THEY CAME
AND PUT ME IN THIS PLACE

JING

REMEMBER HOW
WE SAID WE'D WAIT FOREVER
REMEMBER HOW
WE HAD TO SAY GOODBYE
I NEED YOU NOW
IF ONLY YOU COULD BE HERE
TAKE ME AWAY
WE'RE BOTH LATE FOR THE SKY

AARON/JING

I STILL SEND YOU MY LOVE
I STILL SEND YOU MY LOVE
I STILL SEND YOU MY LOVE

AARON

I STILL SEND ALL MY LOVE

JING

WE COULDN'T KNOW THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN
GOD I WISH YOU WERE FREE

AARON

I NEED YOU TO TELL ME NOT TO WORRY
YOU'RE ALL ALONE
AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF ME

AARON continues playing during the guitar solo while JING paces in her room.

AARON (CONT'D)

IT'S BEEN SO LONG
SO LONG I CAN'T REMEMBER
IT'S BEEN SO LONG
SINCE I'VE SEEN YOUR SHINING FACE
NOW ALL I HAVE IS JUST A FADED MEMORY
UNTIL THAT DAY YOU TAKE ME FROM THIS PLACE

AARON/JING

I STILL SEND YOU MY LOVE
I STILL SEND YOU MY LOVE
I STILL SEND YOU MY LOVE

AARON

I STILL SEND ALL MY LOVE

*JING hangs her head in despair. Lights
comedown in JING'S room and AARON'S
cell. STUDENTS remove AARON'S cell
scenery.*

SCENE 18

Lights come up on the shop and the apartment. No scenery change. A few months later in the morning. LING-SI is at the register and her PARENTS are working in the shop. JING is upstairs in the apartment out of sight from the public eye. OLD LING-SI comes on stage.

OLD LING-SI

It's now a few months later and Yao has returned from his annual monthlong January business trip to Hong Kong. His lucrative furniture import business has allowed him to buy a sizable number of buildings in Chinatown. Shrewd and astute, his business interests grow substantially each year. Even in China Yao is infamous for his temper and compulsion for only the best. Up until his departure it was relatively easy to disguise my sister's expanding waistline, but oversized blouses and long dresses will only work for so long, as you are about to see...

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. YAO enters the shop carrying a guzheng and sets it down on the counter.

YAO

Ni hao ma Ling-si.

LING-SI

Hen hao,xie xie ni. How was your trip?

YAO

Hong Kong was fine, but I've been away too long. I found a fine guzheng just for Jing.

YAO holds it up for LING-SI to see

YAO (CONT'D)

Is she here?

MRS. PO and MR. PO notice YAO and come over to the register.

MRS. PO

Welcome back Master Yao.

MR. PO

Jing is asleep upstairs.

YAO

Could you wake her? I think she'd like to see this.

YAO pats the guzheng.

MRS. PO

She's not feeling well.

YAO

Please, this won't take long.

MR. PO

(quietly to MRS. PO)

We can't hide this forever.

MRS. PO

Maybe tomorrow

YAO

I'm sure she'd like to see it.

YAO lays the guzheng on the counter by the register.

MRS. PO

It's beautiful.

MR. PO comes over to MRS. PO

MR. PO

Please. Go get Jing.

MRS. PO goes upstairs and brings down a visibly pregnant JING. YAO looks up and sees JING on the stairs. HE stops in HIS tracks and stares. HE is instantly very angry.

MRS. PO

I can explain.

YAO

What the hell is this?

MRS. PO

The American boy.

YAO

Why didn't you tell me?

JING and MRS. PO continue down the stairs. JING sits in a chair, listening with HER head down.

YAO (CONT'D)

This is outrageous. Who knows about this?

MRS. PO

Just the family.

YAO

And you're telling me this only now! Just some minor detail you forgot to mention! Incredible! Not too hard to figure this one out! Get Yao used to the idea. Then he couldn't possibly say no!

MRS. PO

We didn't want to burden you until we were sure.

YAO

Well, I think we're pretty sure now! Look at her! If word gets out, I will look like a fool! And I'm sure we all know who the father is, that hippie!

MRS. PO

The boy is in prison for a few years.

YAO

So Jing needs a husband.

YAO looks at JING.

YAO (CONT'D)

(almost laughing)

Don't look at me. And say goodbye to your shop!

MRS. PO begins to smile, trying to tempt him. LING-SI goes over to JING and puts her hands on her shoulders.

MRS. PO

(doing damage control)

We know you have always been fond of Jing. She is young and headstrong, but has a good heart.

JING

(softly to HER mother)

Mother, please.

YAO glances periodically at JING throughout the rest of the conversation in a nervous fashion. He is clearly torn.

YAO

(to MRS. PO)

Why did you let this happen with so much at stake?

MRS. PO

She is a wonderful musician and cook. A man of your importance should have a wife of great beauty and intelligence.

YAO appears to be weakening.

YAO

I know what you are trying to do, but you had your chance.

YAO looks directly at JING.

YAO (CONT'D)

(to JING)

You have disgraced your family and cost them everything!

YAO begins to storm out of the shop. Upon reaching the door, he abruptly turns around, comes back to the counter, snatches the guzheng from the counter, and leaves.

MRS. PO

(to JING)

You were our last hope.

Lights come down on the shop. EVERYONE leaves the stage.

SCENE 19

Prison visiting area a few days later. STUDENTS bring on the prison visiting area scenery. The BAND members have come to visit AARON. The BAND members are seated on a bench opposite the screen that separates the prisoners from the visitors. THEY are waiting impatiently. AARON walks onstage in his orange jump suit and is excited to see the BAND. The BAND crowds around the screen to visit. NICK watches from a distance.

Guys!

AARON

Great to see you man!

RAMON

Prison dude! You look great in orange.

SCOTT

How they treating you?

DAVID

Okay. How's the band?

AARON

We still play the rallies. But it's not the same without you.

PAUL

Hey. We just got booked for the Golden Gate Park rally. Should be huge.

RAMON

Alright!

AARON

April 24th. We're the headliners.

PAUL

AARON thinks for a moment and then smiles.

Could you use another guitarist?

AARON

No, I don't think so. *(blankly)*

SCOTT

What do you mean?

DAVID

AARON motions for the BAND to come closer. HE waits a moment before HE divulges his secret

Okay. Check this.

AARON

AARON pauses dramatically

One week from now, I'm released!

AARON (CONT'D)

Holy shit!

SCOTT

The BAND is ecstatic.

Yeah!

PAUL

How?

RAMON

It seems I am a model prisoner. Out in less than a year!

AARON

The band is back!

SCOTT

SCOTT pauses for a moment, thinking.

Hey, hey! I got it! Words for the anthem!

SCOTT (CONT'D)

EVERYONE looks at SCOTT in disbelief for such nonlinear thinking.

What? RAMON

Okay. Check it. SCOTT

SCOTT starts singing by himself and motions for the others to join in. The BAND sings in a loud and raucous manner. The BAND sings "CUE 39-JAIL'S NOT THE ANSWER" to the tune of ANTHEM.

JAIL'S NOT THE ANSWER
SET AARON FREE
HELL NO HE DIDN'T GO
FUCK CAPTIVITY

SCOTT (CONT'D)

That's funny! PAUL

JAIL'S NOT THE ANSWER
SET AARON FREE
HELL NO HE DIDN'T GO
FUCK CAPTIVITY

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

AARON conducts them in fun. NICK laughs.

JAIL'S NOT THE ANSWER
SET AARON FREE
HELL NO HE DIDN'T GO
FUCK CAPTIVITY

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID (CONT'D)

When can I pick you up? RAMON

The 22nd. But there's something I need you to do. AARON

Anything man. RAMON

Get word to Jing. And make sure her parents don't get wind of this. AARON

Sure. RAMON

NICK starts to move the BAND members out of the visiting area and off stage.

Okay, okay. I think that's enough for one day. NICK

The BAND continues to sing as they move off the stage. NICK gently nudges THEM along.

Okay, let's sing it again! SCOTT

Okay! PAUL

JAIL'S NOT THE ANSWER
SET AARON FREE
HELL NO HE DIDN'T GO
FUCK CAPTIVITY
RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

Alright boys, let's go. NICK

JAIL'S NOT THE ANSWER
SET AARON FREE
HELL NO HE DIDN'T GO
FUCK CAPTIVITY

RAMON
(calling to AARON over his shoulder as he leaves the stage)
One week man. Just like old times.

AARON
(calling back to RAMON)
Jing. Tell Jing

STUDENTS remove prison area scenery while softly singing SCOTT'S new words to "Anthem". Fade to black.

That evening at the Po family shop. No scenery change. The shop is closed. The lights come up quickly to reveal JING, still very pregnant, and MRS. PO coming down the stairs from the apartment hurriedly. JING leads the way. THEY are having a heated argument. They walkover to the register. MRS. PO and JING sing “CUE 40-GIVE IT UP”.

JING
I don't even believe this!

MRS. PO
Not so fast young lady!

JING
You can't blame this on me!

MRS. PO
WE HAVE NO CHOICE

JING
HOW CAN YOU ASK ME THAT?
IT'S ALWAYS YOU
AND WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

MRS. PO
I DO WHAT'S BEST
TO SAVE THIS FAMILY

JING
YOU THINK YOU KNOW?
I DON'T REALLY THINK SO

MRS. PO
Don't talk like that to me! What I say goes in this family.

JING
Did you ever ask me about any of this? And what I want?

MRS. PO

It's too late for that now. Don't you even care what happens to your family?
SHOULD WE GIVE UP
THE SHOP BECAUSE OF YOU?

JING

DON'T YOU BLAME ME
FOR YOUR CATASTROPHE

MRS. PO

DON'T YOU FORGET
WHAT YAO'S DONE FOR US

JING

The man's a slime.

MRS. PO

WHAT LUCK HE'S CHANGED HIS MIND

JING

(becoming more angry)

WHAT KIND OF MAN WOULD ASK ME
SOMETHING THAT I CAN'T DO?
THE MAN'S GONE TOTALLY WILD

MRS. PO

WE HAVE A CHANCE NOW, YAO WILL GIVE US THE SHOP

JING

IF I GIVE UP MY CHILD!

MRS. PO

(becoming more angry)

SO KEEP THE BABY, WHAT CHANCE DO YOU REALLY HAVE?

JING

AARON'S OUT IN A YEAR

MRS. PO

HE'S JUST A HIPPIE
AND LEFT MY DAUGHTER ALL ALONE
WITH HIS CHILD TO REAR!

JING

(furious)

I won't argue with you! You know nothing about him! Aaron's an honorable man.

MRS. PO

Honorable enough to leave you with his child! At least Yao will marry you!

JING

(screaming)

That's enough! I won't be blackmailed by Yao! Or you! It's my life and my child! I will never give him up! This is bullshit!

MRS. PO comes over to JING, grabs HER by the shoulder and spins HER around.

MRS. PO

IF YOU CAN'T DO THIS FOR YOUR FAMILY
YOU CAN'T LIVE HERE
I MEAN IT, IS THAT CLEAR?

*MRS. PO comes face to face with JING.
JING shakes her head no.*

Then you're no daughter of mine.

The music slows and singing becomes more quiet as JING cannot believe what SHE has just heard.

JING

What?

(long pause)

You would do that?

MRS. PO

WHAT CHANCE DO YOU HAVE
IF YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN
DON'T ASK ME FOR HELP
YOU'LL DO THIS ALL ALONE
NO HUSBAND, NOWHERE TO LIVE
You have no choice.

*JING stands speechless. Lights go dark instantly with the last resounding chord.
MRS. PO and JING leave the stage.*

(MORE)

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

No scenery change. One week later. Lights come up on AARON sitting in his cell. In a spotlight OLD LING-SI comes onstage slowly, in thought. Media screen shows images of LING-SI taking JING to the hospital, entry way of the Chinese hospital, and the delivery room.

OLD LING-SI

My sister was caught up in the vortex of this storm: pregnant and unable to marry the incarcerated father, blackmailed by her own family into a marriage of convenience, forced to give up her child, shamed by her family, and purposely kept apart from the man she loved. As a mother, I cannot even conceive of my precious daughters being wrested from my arms. I can hardly imagine my sister's pain.

OLD LING-SI becomes slightly teary and uneasy.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I intentionally include myself when I say blackmailed by her own family. Aaron once told me how Martin Luther King said that silence is betrayal. It was true for the Vietnam War and it was true for me. My mother forced Jing to sign the adoption papers, again, threatening to put her out on the street. And I did nothing. My sister descended into a despair the likes I have never seen. I spent many hours consoling her with green tea and Lu DaGun, her favorite rice snack. I suppose I was overly attentive, trying to make up for my inaction and acquiescence.

OLD LING-SI continues with difficulty, recalling the past.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

Jing insisted that I be present for the delivery. It was something I will never forget. Her little boy was quickly prepped, wrapped, and about to be taken away forever, when my poor sister began to wail in utter pathos. It was like a knife through my heart, almost like the cry of a wounded animal. To this day I have never witnessed such abject anguish. The kindhearted nurse held the baby close to Jing's face. Through her tears she simply whispered,

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

“Goodbye my love.” And just like that, Jing and Aaron's baby boy was gone.

OLD LING-SI turns sadly to leave the stage. Media screen goes dark.

NICK comes onstage, approaches AARON, and lets him out of the cell.

NICK

(to AARON)

Here's your stuff kid and say goodbye to the slammer.

AARON walks up to NICK. NICK gives AARON a bag filled with his personal belongings.

AARON

I couldn't have done it without you.

NICK

(in fatherly manner)

Get out of here kid. You can keep the guitar. As a souvenir.

THEY walk away from the cell towards a table.

NICK (CONT'D)

Someone's here to pick you up.

RAMON comes onstage.

AARON

So good to see you. You have no idea.

THEY hug. AARON gets out of his jumpsuit and into his regular clothes as the conversation progresses.

RAMON

You're a free man!

Slaps AARON on the back.

RAMON (CONT'D)

Out after less than twelve months! That beats two years!

NICK turns to go.

AARON

Nick, wait a minute!

*AARON motions for RAMON to follow.
THEY walk over to NICK.*

AARON (CONT'D)

Ramon, this is Nick. The man who kept me sane through all this.

NICK

It was my pleasure. You're a good kid Aaron.

NICK and RAMON shake hands

RAMON

(smiling)

Thanks for looking after this bum.

NICK

No problem.

NICK now turns to AARON.

NICK (CONT'D)

And don't forget what I told you. About Jing.

AARON

Yes sir.

*In a burst of appreciation, AARON seizes
NICK and hugs him tightly. NICK is slightly
uncomfortable with such an overt display of
emotion.*

NICK

(laughing)

Ah, you hippies, always big huggers.

*NICK leaves the stage as he flashes the
peace sign. AARON anxiously turns to
RAMON.*

AARON

(anxious)

Have you heard from Jing?

RAMON shakes his head.

RAMON

No. I stopped by twice. No luck.

AARON

Let's stop by on the way home. I have to see her.

RAMON

Whatever you say. Come on, let's get the hell out of here.

AARON, NICK, and RAMON move off stage. STUDENTS remove the cell scenery and bring on the scenery for AARON'S apartment, which remains unlit. Lights come up on the PO family shop and apartment. A little later on the same day. LING-SI is working in the shop. JING is upstairs on her bed curled up in postpartum depression. SHE is no longer pregnant. There are no customers in the shop. MR. and MRS. PO are getting ready to go out. THEY put on their coats and begin to descend the stairs to the shop. AARON enters the shop.

LING-SI

(shocked to see AARON)

Oh my God! Aaron!

LING-SI gives AARON a big hug.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? How..

AARON

(interrupting her, excitedly)

Early release! Can you believe it?

(pause)

Where's Jing?

MR. and MRS. PO see what's going on. THEY hurry down the stairs and come over to LING-SI.

LING-SI

She's in the...

MRS. PO

(interrupting LING-SI)

That American boy!

LING-SI

(quickly and under her breath)

Jing had to...

MR. PO

(interrupting LING-SI)

Are you Jing's, uh, friend?

MRS. PO

(agitated)

Jing is going to marry a Chinese man. She is not here.

SHE tries to shoo AARON away. MRS. PO firmly grasps AARON'S arm and tries to move him towards the door. AARON doesn't move.

AARON

Please Mrs. Po, I need to see Jing.

MRS. PO does not respond.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to LING-SI)

Is she here?

MRS. PO

Please. You must leave!

MRS. PO again tries to move AARON out the door. HE stands his ground.

AARON

(pleading)

Please Mr. Po, Jing would want to see me. I'm sure of it.

MR. PO

(having trouble telling a lie)

Please, Jing is not here. It is best that you leave.

LING-SI shakes her head. MRS. PO picks up the phone and begins to dial.

MRS. PO

I am calling the police!

AARON

(to LING-SI in desperation)

Ling-si, where is Jing?

LING-SI

She's right...

MRS. PO

(to LING-SI, interrupting HER)

Don't!

MR. PO

(to AARON)

Please. We don't want any trouble.

MR. PO starts to move AARON towards the door.

AARON

(pleading)

What about the baby? I have to know. Please!

MRS. PO starts to talk on the phone to the police.

MRS. PO

(into the phone)

We have some trouble at our shop.

AARON

(to MR. PO)

I just want to talk to her.

MRS. PO

(into the phone)

At Grant and Clay.

AARON

(frantic, to LING-SI)

What happened?

LING-SI tries to answer but MRS. PO makes a quick hand gesture to silence her. AARON and MR. PO are approaching the door. A police siren is heard in the distance. AARON stands at the door looking with disbelief for a moment.

AARON (CONT'D)

(in abject frustration)

Please, I have to know.

AARON turns to go out the door. HE leaves the stage. MRS. PO puts the phone down.

LING-SI

(to MRS. PO)

Was that really necessary? Aaron should know the truth.

MRS. PO

After the wedding.

LING-SI

This is honorable Chinese behavior?

MRS. PO dismisses her with a wave of her hand.

MR. PO

We're meeting Yao at the title office. We should be back in about an hour and a half.

MRS. PO

(emphatically)

And you are not to tell Jing about that boy!

MR. and MRS. PO leave the shop. LING-SI immediately sprints up the stairs to the apartment living room and into JING'S room.

LING-SI

(to JING, breathless)

Aaron was just here!

JING

What?

JING is instantly on her feet.

LING-SI

Early release. Mom and Dad tossed him out.

JING gets a coat and puts it on. SHE is excited.

JING

I have to explain.

LING-SI

Well, you better hurry. They went to the title office with Yao. You have about an hour and a half.

THEY both hurry down the stairs to the shop. JING hugs LING-SI and leaves the shop. LING-SI leaves the stage as the lights come down on the shop. Lights come up on AARON'S apartment. A little later the same day. Only AARON'S apartment is lighted. AARON and RAMON arrive at the apartment. A banner saying "Welcome Home" is on the wall for his welcome home party. All the BAND members are there, plus friends. Beer and marijuana are everywhere. Music plays. The apartment has a piano. AARON and RAMON enter the apartment. AARON is becoming more and more despondent.

BAND MEMBERS

Welcome home Aaron!

Much hoopla and good feelings and hugs.

SCOTT

Hail the conquering musician!

DAVID jumps up on a chair with AARON standing directly in front of him. HE puts his hands on AARON'S shoulders.

DAVID

And now! Fresh from his acclaimed whirlwind tour of the Big House. Your favorite felon and mine, the man who gave "the joint" a whole new meaning.

Those smoking pot hold up their joints and cheer. PAUL comes over and stands next to AARON.

PAUL

The sultan of the slammer, the prince of penal. Should I say that? I give you Aaron "Fuck Authority" Thomas!!!

Cheering. AARON bows graciously as if to an audience. The hoopla dies down and AARON and RAMON settle into some chairs as the party goes listen and watch. SCOTT comes over to AARON. SCOTT kisses AARON on the top of his head.

SCOTT

(to AARON)

It's good to have you back man. There's no band without you.

AARON nods in appreciation.

RAMON

Did you see Jing inside?

AARON

No. I barely talked to Ling-si and then her parents tossed me out.

RAMON just shakes his head.

RAMON

I'm sorry man. What a welcome home present.

AARON

I have to see her.

DAVID comes over to RAMON and AARON and puts his hands on AARON'S shoulders.

DAVID

We play the big rally tomorrow at Golden Gate Park. You game?

AARON

Sure.

SCOTT

(to AARON)

Yeah! Just like old times.

PAUL

I say we head to the Buena Vista to celebrate!

AARON

(to RAMON)

Go ahead. I appreciate the party and all, but I just want to be alone.

AARON turns to look at the party people. THEY start to disperse, including the BAND members. As people leave, THEY quietly wish AARON well and pat him on the back as THEY go out the door. AARON is left alone in the overstuffed chair with the "Welcome Home" banner right behind him. HE sits for a moment in despair. HE goes to the piano. The lights come down and focus only on AARON. AARON sings "CUE 41- ALL THE ANSWERS".

AARON (CONT'D)

ALL THE ANSWERS
WERE HIDDEN FROM MY VIEW
TO ALL THOSE QUESTIONS
THE ONES I THOUGHT I KNEW
BUT AFTER ALL THIS TIME
I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD FIND
A REASON WHY

AS A YOUNG MAN
I LIVED FROM DAY TO DAY
BLIND TO THE HORIZON
MY LIFE IN DISARRAY
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE
THE THINGS YOU SAW IN ME
THAT I COULDN'T SEE

NOW IT'S SUCH A BATTLE
TO GET ME THROUGH THE DAY
MY SOLITUDE AND ANGER
IN A SAD AND GRACELESS AGE

I GUESS I NEVER NOTICED
I GUESS I NEVER KNEW
THAT I WOULD NEVER BE ME
WITHOUT YOU

WAS IT WORTH THE ANGUISH
AND ALL THE THINGS I LOST
I NEVER THOUGHT A CONSCIENCE
WOULD COME AT SUCH A COST
HOW DIFFERENT THINGS WOULD BE
THE SUN, THE MOON, AND ME
IF I'D HAVE BEEN FREE

ALL I SEEM TO THINK OF
IS HOW I'D CHANGE THE PAST
HAUNTED BY THE VISION
OF A LIFE I COULDN'T HAVE
I GUESS THAT'S ALL BEHIND ME
I GUESS IT'S SAD BUT TRUE
THAT I DON'T WANNA BE ME
WITHOUT YOU

When HE finishes HE sits still at the piano for a moment and then slams his hands down on the keyboard in frustration. HE sits at the piano in darkness with his head down. JING arrives at AARON'S apartment door and finds it unlocked. SHE knocks but no one answers. AARON ignores the knocking.

JING

Hello?

SHE knocks again and then goes in. SHE turns on the light.

JING (CONT'D)

Hello, anyone here? It's Jing. Aaron? Are you here?

AARON hears her voice and is instantly alert.

AARON

Jing?

THEY rush together for a long passionate embrace. THEY are ecstatic. THEY sing "CUE 42-I PROMISE".

JING/AARON

I DREAMED ABOUT THIS DAY
I WAITED FOR SO LONG

AARON

SO I COULD TOUCH YOUR FACE

JING

SO I COULD HEAR YOUR SONG

THEY separate. AARON turns JING around to inspect HER as if THEY were doing a waltz.

AARON

(Good naturedly)

Oh my!

MY GOD, LOOK AT YOU
AFTER ALL THAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH
STILL SO DELICATE AND FINE
I WOULD KEEP YOU IN MY MIND
WHEN I WAS IN DESPAIR
YOU TWO WERE MY PRAYER

Can I see my son?

JING

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW
YOU WON'T WANT TO HEAR
BUT HOW WAS I TO KNOW?
THAT SUDDENLY YOU'D JUST APPEAR
BEFORE THAT I DO
TELL ME IT'S TRUE
I NEED TO HEAR YOU SAY
YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE
MAKE ME BELIEVE
YOU'LL NEVER GO AWAY

AARON

Of course.

JING separates from AARON and looks at the floor in despair.

JING

I DID THIS ALL ON MY OWN
I HAD TO LIVE AT HOME
THEY SAID I COULDN'T STAY
UNLESS I GAVE OUR CHILD AWAY

JING sits down on the piano bench and puts her head in her hands and starts to cry slightly. AARON looks at HER in disbelief.

AARON

What do you mean? You gave our boy away?

JING

(almost unable to speak)

He was adopted last week.

AARON

(starting to anger)

Adopted? How could you do that? Why?

SHE stops crying and summons up HER strength.

JING

I didn't have a choice! You weren't here and I had to do the best I could.

AARON

(concerned)

What do you mean?

JING

Yao said he'd give Mom and Dad the building if I would marry him and give up the baby. They totally bought it.

AARON

Unbelievable! That's blackmail!

JING

Mom said she'd throw me out of the house if I didn't. I didn't know you'd be out early.

AARON

(calming down)

Neither did I until last week. I asked Ramon to stop by but he never got past your parents.

JING

If I would have known, this didn't have to happen.

AARON is overwhelmed with this revelation.

AARON

I can't believe this. Where is our son?

JING

I don't know. Legally they can't tell you.

In despair AARON slowly sits down next to JING on the piano bench.

AARON

(in sadness)

So we'll never know. And I never even got to see him.

(AARON pauses for a moment)

Are you married?

JING

No. Next week.

AARON

I put you in this position. And I wasn't there for you.

JING

No. We both made this happen. I allowed myself to be blackmailed. I let them take our son.

JING starts to cry softly again.

JING (CONT'D)

I thought you'd be gone for two years. I didn't know what to do.

AARON comforts JING and holds HER in HIS arms.

AARON

You did what you had to do. We both did.

(AARON tries to console JING)

Tell me about our son.

JING stops crying. SHE stands up. AARON remains seated.

JING

I wish you could have seen him. He's a wonderful blend of both of us. A brown eyed, black haired angel.

I'LL UNDERSTAND
NOW THAT YOU KNOW
IF YOU HATE ME
FOR WHAT I'VE DONE
IF YOU FEEL
THAT YOU HAVE TO GO

AARON stands up.

AARON

I PROMISED YOU I'D NEVER CHANGE
I PROMISED YOU I'D NEVER GO
YOU'RE THE MOTHER OF MY CHILD
YOU'RE THE ONE I STILL LOVE SO

AARON takes JING'S hands.

JING/AARON

I PROMISE YOU I'LL NEVER CHANGE
I PROMISE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART
A FAMILY IS WHAT WE ARE
NOTHING NOW CAN KEEP US APART

AARON

I STILL PROMISE YOU

JING

I PROMISE TOO

JING/AARON

I PROMISE YOU
OUR BOY SHOULD BE HERE TOO

JING

I'm so sorry. I need him back.

AARON

We both do.

The song "I PROMISE" ends here. AARON and JING sit down. AARON holds JING in his arms.

What are we going to do?

AARON (CONT'D)

JING runs her hand through her hair in frustration.

I lost our child. I won't lose you.

JING

AARON thinks for a moment.

AARON

(tenderly)
Marry me? Instead of that Yao?

SHE looks him straight in the eye

Really?

JING

AARON nods.

Sure.

JING (CONT'D)

(pause)
This won't be easy.

AARON releases JING and becomes more animated.

AARON

(more forcefully)
I don't care. You can't marry this guy.

JING

(struggling)
What about my family and...

AARON

(interrupting JING)
After what they've done to you?

(pause)
We don't have any choice now.

JING

What do you mean?

AARON

Stay here. After the rally tomorrow we can just leave.

JING

Rally?

AARON

We play the rally tomorrow in Golden Gate Park.

JING

Do you really think this will work?

AARON

Your parents don't know where I live. We can be out of the apartment by morning.

JING

(worried)

I don't know. This will be hard on them.

(pause)

What about the band?

AARON

What's really important here? If we stay here, it's all over. And your parents are using you!

JING

(torn)

I know, I know.

JING looks concerned.

AARON

(tenderly)

What's the matter?

JING

This is hard for me. My family. You.

(pause, thoughtfully)

And everything is riding on this.

(pause)

I guess we're paying the price for being different. Maybe that's the reason we're together.

*AARON turns and looks JING in the face.
HE takes her hands.*

AARON

(trying to cheer her up)

I have a new song or two. One for you. I'll do it at the rally.

JING

I'd love that.

*Fade to black. STUDENTS remove
apartment scenery.*

Later in the evening on the same day. The PO family's Chinatown shop. The shop, JING'S room, and apartment are the only lighted elements onstage. LING-SI is downstairs minding the shop as her PARENTS and YAO return from the title office.

YAO

(to Ling-si)

Well, your parents will be the proud owners of this building on Monday!

MRS. PO

(to LING-SI, concerned about JING)

Where is Jing?

LING-SI

In her room.

MR. and MRS. PO with YAO head up the stairs to the apartment. Cut to the living room.

MRS. PO

Master Yao, would you care for some tea?

YAO

Xie xie ni. (Thank you) You are too kind.

MRS. PO heads to the kitchen to fix the tea. YAO and MR. PO are chatting in Chinese at the table. MRS. PO puts the water on to boil and heads down the hall to check on JING. SHE knocks gently on JING'S door.

MRS. PO

Jing dear, would you like some tea?

No response.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Jing?

(pause)

Jing?

SHE enters JING'S room and discovers JING isn't there. SHE comes out in a hurry and goes to the living room.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

(to MR. PO and YAO)

Jing isn't in her room! Is she downstairs?

MR. PO

I don't know, ask your daughter.

MRS. PO calls to LING-SI from the top of the stairs.

MRS. PO

(to LING-SI)

Where is your sister?

LING-SI

In her room.

MRS. PO

(a little louder now)

She is not in her room!

No response from LING-SI. MRS. PO is becoming annoyed.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Come up here please.

LING-SI slowly ascends the stairs, looking down and dreading what is about to happen. SHE enters the apartment

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

(more annoyed)

Where is your sister?

LING-SI

(answering quietly)

I thought she was in her room.

YAO and MR. PO get up and walk briskly to JING'S door and look in. The tea kettle is starting to whistle slightly.

THEY return to the living room. LING-SI is standing, like a prisoner awaiting a guilty verdict.

MR. PO

(with concern)

Is Jing alright?

No response from LING-SI.

YAO

(his temper starting to show)

Where is Jing?

No response from LING-SI. The tea kettle is starting to make some serious noise. YAO's temper is starting to show. HE comes over to LING-SI and stands right in front of her in an intimidating way.

YAO (CONT'D)

(more emphatically now)

Where is Jing!?

LING-SI does not respond but only backs away from YAO. YAO now comes up to LING-SI and takes her firmly by the shoulders. The tea kettle is screaming now.

YAO (CONT'D)

(his anger showing)

I'm sure you know! Where?

At this point, LING-SI snaps. After all of the years of being the good daughter, SHE can't take it. As soon as YAO grabs her shoulders, SHE knocks THEM aside in pent up fury. LING-SI sings "CUE 43-LING-SI BLOWS UP"

LING-SI

(with fury and the tea kettle going full blast)

AS IF I WOULD TELL YOU!
AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

SHE GAVE UP HER ONLY SON
 THIS PLACE IS A MAD HOUSE
 NOW SHE CAN LEAVE IT ALL BEHIND
 I'M SORRY THAT IT TOOK SO LONG
 TO SPEAK MY MIND

YOU ONLY WANT THIS BUILDING
 AND YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE
 WE'RE NOTHING MORE THAN PAWNS
 JUST THE HIRED HELP TO YOU
 YOU ALL MAKE ME SICK
 THE WAY YOU SOLD OFF JING

LING-SI glares at YAO.

OR HOW YOU TRIED TO GET YOUR WAY
 BY GIVING HER SOME CHEAP GUZHENG!
 I'VE GOT NOTHING TO TELL
 ALL OF YOU CAN GO STRAIGHT TO HELL!
 I'M GLAD THAT SHE'S FINALLY FREE
 BUT I'LL MISS HOW WE USED TO BE

(softly and with some remorse)

I DIDN'T REALLY HELP
 WHEN SHE NEEDED ME
 THE BLAME'S PARTLY MINE
 FOR THIS TRAVESTY
 I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO MY HEART
 INSTEAD OF WHAT YOU SAY
 SHE WOULD HAVE HER SON

(angry again)

BUT YOU TOOK THAT ALL AWAY!
 SHE'S GONNA BE OKAY
 IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT
 YOU DROVE HER AWAY
 YOU'LL PROBABLY NEVER SEE HER AGAIN
 AND NOW I'VE LOST MY BEST FRIEND

I can't believe this. I let this happen to my own sister!

*LING-SI pauses, staring at THEM in anger.
 MRS. PO comes over and puts HER hands
 on LING-SI'S shoulders. LING-SI angrily
 brushes them off and walks away.*

LING-SI (CONT'D)

Shut that stupid tea kettle off!! Zhu tou!! (pig head)

MRS. PO runs over and turns off the tea kettle. YAO'S temper is flaring. HE approaches LING-SI, takes her by the shoulders again and slaps her across the face.

YAO

Where?!

(yelling)

LING-SI recoils in fear. MR. PO has now had enough as well.

MR. PO

Enough!

(angry)

HE shields LING-SI and pushes YAO away.

MR. PO (CONT'D)

Stay away from my...

MRS. PO comes over to YAO. SHE is almost groveling at YAO'S feet.

MRS. PO

I am so sorry Master Yao, you are...

(interrupting)

MR. PO interrupts forcefully.

MR. PO

Sit down! You've done enough! And not another word!

(speaking slowly and with great authority to MRS. PO)

HE points at MRS. PO. SHE stops in her tracks and reluctantly sits down.

MR. PO (CONT'D)

There will be no wedding! Keep your building! And stay away from my family!

LING-SI looks on in amazement.

LING-SI

Dad, what about...

MR. PO

(with great authority)

I will not sacrifice my family!

MR. PO takes YAO by the arm and moves him toward the door.

YAO

(with malice)

You will regret this.

YAO turns to go out the door.

LING-SI

(to YAO with anger)

You'll never find her! And get the hell out!

YAO leaves. Lights fade to black.

STUDENTS bring on a bench and place it just outside the PO shop. Flash forward to the present. The media screen now shows JOHN and SABRINA walking from shop to shop in Chinatown. JOHN and SABRINA walk onstage. JOHN is carrying a list in his hand. THEY appear to be tired. THEY sit on the bench. The shop, bench, and apartment are the only lighted elements.

SABRINA

My feet.

JOHN

I think Po's must be like Smiths. They're everywhere.

Points to the door of the Po shop.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Let's do one more and then I'll buy you lunch.

SABRINA nods wearily. THEY enter the shop. A young lady minds the register.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to register girl)

Hi. We're looking for information about a Jing Po who used to live here in the 70s.

The REGISTER GIRL is immediately interested.

REGISTER GIRL

Jing Po? I was named after my aunt Jing Po.

JOHN

Can you tell us anything about her?

REGISTER GIRL

Not really. But my mom can. Mom!

SHE calls to her MOTHER who is coming down the stairs. It is OLD LING-SI who is now over 60 years old.

SHE comes over to the register. SHE looks at JOHN and gasps slightly.

OLD LING-SI

(regaining her composure)

Can I help you?

JOHN

We're trying to find out about a Jing Po. We think she lived in this area in the 70s.

LING-SI takes her time to respond. SHE is obviously taken aback by the question.

OLD LING-SI

Jing Po was my sister. My daughter here was named after her.

Motions to the REGISTER GIRL. SABRINA and JOHN look at each other.

SABRINA

We found this clipping in his mother's things after she died.

LING-SI inspects the clipping. Media screen displays the old photo of AARON.

OLD LING-SI

I remember Aaron well.

JOHN

I was born just days before this and adopted by the Clark family. This is my wife Sabrina and I'm John Clark.

OLD LING-SI

Nice to meet you. Please sit down.

LING-SI bows. THEY all sit down at a small table.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

(becoming very interested)

You were born just before this?

JOHN

April 17th, 1971. Here in San Francisco.

OLD LING-SI

(in disbelief)

Oh my God.

JOHN

Can you help us?

OLD LING-SI

Oh yes.

JOHN and SABRINA look at each other.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I knew it when I saw you.

JOHN

What do you mean?

OLD LING-SI

(smiling)

You look just like your mother.

SABRINA

John is your sister's son?

LING-SI nods.

JOHN

Do you think we will ever really know?

OLD LING-SI

I already know.

LING-SI stands up and pauses before continuing.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I need to show you something.

OLD LING-SI quickly goes to the counter and pulls an envelope from a drawer. SHE comes over to the table and sits down. SHE takes the contents out carefully and puts them on the table in an almost reverent manner.

This is obviously very difficult for her. A teary OLD LING-SI looks at JOHN. JOHN picks up the Blue Moonstone pendant. He holds it out in front of him, looking intently at it and sets it back down on the table.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

These are her things from that day.

JOHN

What day?

STUDENTS remove the PO family shop and apartment from the stage. Fade to black.

Flashback to 1971. The next day. The split level staging is removed to reveal a large empty stage. April 24th, 1971. Golden Gate Park at Kezar stadium. It is 11 A.M., one hour before the rally starts. OLD LING-SI comes on stage as the STUDENTS bring ten chairs onstage and place them onstage right for speakers and dignitaries, including a podium, banners, and microphone. As OLD LING-SI speaks, JING comes onstage and sits in one of the chairs. SHE watches as AARON and the BAND MEMBERS bring their musical gear onstage. THEY make multiple trips from off stage as they set up their amplifiers, drums, microphone stands, and cables.

OLD LING-SI

(speaking animatedly)

April 24, 1971 in Golden Gate Park's Kezar Stadium. Over 150,000 are in attendance, one of the largest assemblages of any kind in San Francisco's history. The atmosphere is charged with energy. On the same Sunday in Washington D.C., over 500,000 anti-war protesters also gather. The streets feeding into the park are jammed with attendees. I'm sure that some of you here remember those days. People are singing John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance." Signs and banners abound with the usual messages: "Hell no, we won't go," "U.S. out now," and "Resist the draft." That one is my favorite.

OLD LING-SI points to a banner. Media screen displays the poster.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

"War is not healthy for children and other living things." But not everyone is caught up in the electric rally spirit, as you can see.

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. Still distraught over the loss of her son, JING stands up and goes to the front of the stage and sings "CUE 44-SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW". A solo spot illuminates JING while the light on the BAND MEMBERS diminishes as they continue working.

As JING begins to sing, AARON notices her pensive mood, stops and puts down what he is carrying. HE observes her carefully as SHE sings.

JING

NOW I'VE LOST YOU
I LET YOU GO
I CAN'T TELL YOU
SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW
I CLOSE MY EYES
YOUR SWEET FACE I SEE
I LET THEM TAKE YOU NOW
I'M DYING BY DEGREE

YOU SHOULD BE HERE WITH ME
YOU NEED TO KNOW I LOVE YOU SO

SOMEDAY I PROMISE I'LL TELL YOU WHY
HOW THIS HAPPENED
UNTIL THAT DAY I WILL PRAY
THAT SOMEHOW YOU WILL KNOW
HOW THE SUN AND MOON
WERE LOST SO SOON
I JUST CAN'T LET GO
I'LL GO ON
IT SEEMS SO WRONG
THERE SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW
SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW
NOW YOU'LL NEVER KNOW

AARON comes over to JING and puts his arm around HER. SHE is in tears.

JING (CONT'D)

(tenderly)

I wonder where he is right now?

AARON takes JING'S hand and leads HER back to HER chair. THEY both sit as AARON puts HIS arm around HER. JING regains some of HER composure.

AARON

I suppose we'll never know.

JING

He will never know. He will never know about us. And how all this happened. He'll grow up without us.

AARON

I wonder what he looks like. If he is anything like his mother, he will be amazing.

NEITHER can manage a smile.

JING

I'm sure he will like music. That much is in the genes.

AARON

(pensively)

Maybe something will happen someday. Something that will bring us all back together.

JING

Funny you should say that. I was thinking the same thing.

JING sits up abruptly in HER chair and attempts to shake off HER reverie.

JING (CONT'D)

Better get back to work Mr. Rock Star!

AARON

Aye, aye, mon capitaine!

AARON kisses HER tenderly on the cheek and returns to setting up. After the set up is complete AARON and the BAND MEMBERS take THEIR seats next to JING. MARSHALL LOGAN and the GOLDEN GATE RALLY HOST come onstage and take THEIR seats. At the same time, three very large SECURITY GUARDS walk down the aisles of the theater and take THEIR place in front of the stage. THEY are followed by a group of chanting protesters carrying signs. The sound of the crowd begins to grow. The BAND MEMBERS take the stage and prepare to play.

The media screen above the stage shows images of actual footage from the rally. We see images of the BAND playing, JING and AARON, Vietnam clips, San Francisco landmarks, and YAO making his way through the crowd. The BAND immediately starts playing “CUE 45-DEAD JAM”, an instrumental. It continues for a short time. The rally host comes to the microphone and speaks while the BAND continues to play.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST

Good afternoon everyone! Welcome! We are over 150,000 strong today!

Cheering.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST (CONT'D)

Because united we stand, divided they fall!

More cheering.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST (CONT'D)

We have a great line up today. We have live music. The Reverend Marshall Logan will speak. But first let's start with some music from a man of true conviction. A man who was just released from prison for refusing to serve in the military, our own native son, a San Francisco boy himself, Aaron Thomas and his band! Power to the people!!!

Applause and cheering. “DEAD JAM” ends.

AARON

Thank you so much. It's great to see so many of you here. The Aaron Thomas Band is proud to have been part of the anti-war movement here in San Francisco over the years.

(pause)

Here's a tune we wrote just for the occasion!

AARON, DAVID, and RAMON sing “CUE 46-ANTI-WAR HYMN”

AARON/RAMON/DAVID

I DON'T CARE IF IT'S WRONG OR RIGHT
WE ALL KNOW THAT IT'S NOT OUR FIGHT
IN OUR HEARTS WE KNOW DAMN WELL
MEN OF WAR WILL BURN IN HELL
THEY STILL THINK GOD IS ON THEIR SIDE

EVEN WHEN THEY KILL AND LIE
 DO THEY HELP ALL THE POOR IN NEED
 ALL THEY WANT IS TO SEE THEM BLEED
 KYRIE KYRIE KYRIE ELEISON
 KYRIE KYRIE KYRIE ELEISON

*THEY finish and go directly into the next
 song. RAMON and AARON sing "CUE 47-
 YOU EVER WONDER"*

RAMON

YOU EVER WONDER WHY LIFE AIN'T FAIR
 YOU EVER WONDER WHY NO ONE CARES
 YOU EVER WONDER WHY THINGS DON'T CHANGE
 YOU EVER WONDER WHY YOUR LIFE'S SO LAME

YOU EVER NOTICED YOU GOT NO SAY
 YOU EVER NOTICED ALL THIS MALAISE
 YOU EVER NOTICED THE COMING STORM
 IF YOU'RE NOT OUTRAGED THEN YOU'RE UNINFORMED

CAUSE PEOPLE LIE AND PEOPLE KILL
 WE'RE JUST TOO DANGEROUS TO HAVE FREE WILL
 WHEN THERE'S A CHANCE TO DO SOME GOOD
 WE'D RATHER BURN DOWN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

YOU EVER WONDER WHERE MONEY GOES
 YOU EVER WONDER WHY NO ONE KNOWS
 YOU EVER WONDER WHO PAYS FOR WAR
 IT'S ALWAYS YOU AND ME AND MILLIONS MORE

THEY THINK THAT GOD IS ON THEIR SIDE
 EVEN WHEN THEY KILL AND LIE
 BUT IN OUR HEARTS WE KNOW DAMN WELL
 THAT JESUS SENDS THOSE ASSHOLES ALL TO HELL

INSTEAD OF WHINING AND TALKIN' TRASH
 YOU BETTER GET UP OFF YOUR DEAD ASS.
 IF YOU DO NOTHING, THEN DON'T COMPLAIN
 IT'S REALLY YOU THAT MAKES YOUR LIFE SO LAME

AARON

When the hammer no longer obeys the master, it is the hand that is shaped by the hammer. Now beyond our grasp, the iron blows shape both body and soul. Not only is the enemy crushed into oblivion by the heavy steel blows, but we ourselves are beaten down into numb submission. It is a hammer without a master. With a senseless iron will. But the long slumber must end. Grasp the hammer with the power only the righteous possess. Strike a blow in the battle for peace and regain the upper hand.

Thunderous applause.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

Ramon Ochoa please!

AARON motions to RAMON.

RAMON

Thank you so much.

The BAND goes back to THEIR seats. The GOLDEN GATEPARK RALLY HOST goes to the microphone.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST

Thank you Aaron Thomas Band. More from them later! Now it is my honor to introduce the distinguished orator from Savannah Georgia, the "Captain of Souls", the Reverend Marshall Logan!!

Cheering and applause. The media screen shows images of Vietnam, anti-war rallies and speakers. YAO moves from the back of the hall through the audience and towards the stage. MARSHALL LOGAN comes to the podium.

MARSHALL LOGAN

(in a powerful orator's voice, like Martin Luther King)

Good day my brothers and sisters. In 1917 President Woodrow Wilson described the United States as the "most peace-loving of nations".

How our collective memory has failed us! Since the inception of the United States, there have been hundreds of military operations, both here and abroad, resulting in the deaths of millions of people, the bulk of them so-called "non-combatants". The military is, in short, the imperialistic hammer that beats the drums of war. The most peace loving of all nations? We are, without any doubt, the most belligerent of all nations!! To further our own self interest we have engaged in all manner of depravity.

(MORE)

MARSHALL LOGAN (CONT'D)

And perhaps most amazing of all, we still collectively see ourselves as the purveyors of freedom and justice in this world. The first step to reversing this heritage of imperialism is simple: Realize the true nature of our past and learn from it.

Somehow this madness must stop, for silence is betrayal. We must resolve to change or face the

warning of John F. Kennedy: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable". I would like to close with the famous words of Dr. King. "If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream!!" Thank you!

Flashes the peace sign and sits down. Huge applause. The BAND comes onstage again.

RAMON

(to the crowd)

Here's a little something Aaron wrote just for you...

RAMON, DAVID, and AARON sing "CUE 48-ANTHEM AT GOLDEN GATE PARK" and whip the crowd into a frenzy. The crowd sings along. YAO moves towards the stage.

AARON/DAVID/RAMON

WAR'S NOT THE ANSWER
LOVE IS THE KEY
HELL NO WE WON'T GO
FUCK AUTHORITY

WAR'S NOT THE ANSWER
LOVE IS THE KEY
HELL NO WE WON'T GO
FUCK AUTHORITY

WAR'S NOT THE ANSWER
LOVE IS THE KEY
HELL NO WE WON'T GO
FUCK AUTHORITY

NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH
NAH NAH NAH NAH

NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH
NAH NAH NAH NAH NAH

WAR'S NOT THE ANSWER
LOVE IS THE KEY
HELL NO WE WON'T GO
FUCK AUTHORITY

WAR'S NOT THE ANSWER
LOVE IS THE KEY
HELL NO WE WON'T GO
FUCK AUTHORITY

Song ends. Applause. AARON motions for JING to come onstage as the BAND MEMBERS take a bow. SHE does so reluctantly. AARON and JING embrace in front of 150,000 people. The crowd and the BAND MEMBERS cheer. YAO is enraged and charges toward the front of the stage, pushing people aside. YAO reaches the stage and takes out the one SECURITY GUARD with a single blow to the stomach. JING spots YAO in the crowd.

Aaron! It's Yao!

JING

SHE points to HIM in the crowd and backs away from the front of the stage and ends up a few yards behind AARON.

(furious)
She belongs to me, hippie!! Me!!

YAO

All this happens very quickly. YAO whips out a hand gun.

He's got a gun!!

JING

YAO gets off 3 shots before the remaining two SECURITY GUARDS bring him to the ground. All hell breaks loose. Everyone drops for cover. Screaming and people running. AARON falls to the stage, slightly wounded in his arm. BAND members gather around AARON. RAMON rips his shirt into pieces to make a bandage for AARON's arm. Pandemonium. AARON seems to recover a bit. SECURITY GUARDS are hustling YAO out the back of the theater followed by the frightened protesters.

SCOTT

(in a panic)

Medic! We need a medic here now!

AARON

(weakly)

Where's Jing?

JING has fallen down, mortally wounded, a few feet behind AARON. EVERYONE turns around and sees JING on the stage floor. Renewed pandemonium as EVERYONE realizes that JING is truly injured. AARON attempts to get to his feet but can't. DAVID and RAMON lift AARON up and take him to JING. HE holds JING in his arms. RAMON takes the rest of his shirt and gives it to AARON to put on JING'S wound.

AARON (CONT'D)

(in a panic upon seeing her wound)

Jing! Dear God! Dear God!

JING

(struggling to speak to AARON)

I'm so sorry

(pause)

For everything...

AARON

(in anguish)

It's okay... Be still...I have you now.

JING'S arm falls to her side and SHE becomes unconscious.

AARON (CONT'D)

Please... Jing.... Please....

(in agony)

No!

AARON holds JING in his arms as SHE dies. The sounds of the crowd diminish and the lights fade around JING and AARON. Begin "CUE 49-JING DIES". A solo spot highlights AARON and JING as HE strokes her hair. The media screen displays a faint image of JING and AARON fading into a diffuse background of images consisting of JING'S PARENTS, the war, YAO, prison, and the angry WAITRESS. As the cue comes to an end the spot slowly fades to black.

EVERYONE leaves the stage. STUDENTS quickly remove the chairs, microphone, and musical gear. THEY bring on a solitary door. OLD LING-SI walks slowly to center stage in a solo spot and addresses the audience.

OLD LING-SI

(with sorrow)

My sister died so needlessly that April day. She was the victim of my parents' intolerance and greed. And to a small degree, my indecision. I will never forgive myself, even though my family considers me blameless. It is a shame that I always will live with. But I will not perpetrate that kind of behavior on my children. Love is truly the answer. I am resolved to share my sister's story and show how xenophobia, cultural intolerance, and hate can only cause misery. I suppose I am doing this to somehow absolve myself of my guilt. Perhaps not absolve, but to at least come to terms with my shortcomings. My sister's death is with me always. It sits on my shoulder and goes with me everywhere. I have learned to live with its presence. It makes itself known to me now and then. Every time I tell my sister's story. Every time I go to the night fair. Every time I read her poetry or hear one of Aaron's love songs. Every time I hear my daughter play the guzheng. But John has made the circle complete. It gives my heart such joy to see my sister live on through him. If it is true that our loved ones live on through our memories, then my sister is alive and well. Her life was all too brief, but for a short while she shared life's greatest gift. The joy of selfless love.

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. Begin “CUE 50-AARON AND JOHN”. Flash forward to the present day at AARON’S house.

Afternoon. The stage is bare except for the door. Lights come up on stage. JOHN and SABRINA enter. SABRINA stops JOHN about halfway across.

SABRINA

Go ahead.

JOHN approaches the door and knocks as SABRINA watches. An aging AARON THOMAS answers the door. HE comes out of the doorway and stands face to face with JOHN.

JOHN

Excuse me. Sorry to bother you, but are you Aaron Thomas?

AARON nods. JOHN holds up the blue moonstone as the lights slowly fade to black. After the applause begins, start “CUE 51-OUTRO”

THE END