

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Written by
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"Hallelujah"



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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - NIGHT

ARTHUR COCHRAN (50's, a man who is moved to tears by *La Bohème* but has never put a dollar in an open guitar case) finishes a bottle of bourbon and listens to Fauré's *Requiem*. He holds a FUNERAL PROGRAM: "Jean Cochran, Beloved Wife."

ARTHUR

(to photo)

You have terrible taste, Jean.

Had. You married a huge jerk who didn't deserve you. Then you died - another poor choice - leaving me alone.

(shudders)

In Kentucky.

(another drink)

They do know their bourbon. You promised to send me a sign so I'd know I'm not alone. It's been a month. Where is it?

Nearby, a choir sings the "Hallelujah Chorus." Badly.

CHOIR (O.S.)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Arthur winces at the off-key music and cranks up the Fauré.

ARTHUR

I can't do this without you.

Arthur opens a bottle of PILLS.

CHOIR (O.S.)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

ARTHUR

No, no, no. This will not be the last thing I hear on earth.

EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

He stomps across the cemetery toward a run-down church.

ARTHUR

(muttering)

Pick a note, any note, and all get there at the same time, is that too much to ask?

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A choir rehearses. GINNY (30, never met a dumpster fire she couldn't turn into an opportunity to roast s'mores) plays piano and conducts SHEP (late 20's, soul of a lamb, body of a lion), REVEREND JAX (Asian Jack McBrayer), ADAMS (50's, rural Queen Bee) and WAYNE (30's, scrappy, tattooed).

Arthur barges in, startling them.

ARTHUR

Stop! This is unacceptable.

(to Ginny)

Girl at the piano, you're sliding up to each note, which makes it out of tune for half a second, ruining the listening experience.

(to Shep)

Lurch, sit up and stop mumbling.

(to Rev. Jax, re: pop star hand-to-ear motion)

Is there a bug in your ear? Then don't do that.

(to Adams)

Star Search, it's not just about being loud, this isn't Nascar.

(to Wayne)

Snake Tattoo, George Frideric Handel didn't know anyone named "Hal," it's not "Hal-li-loo-yeer" it's "Hall-lay-loo-ya." Open vowels. You heard of vowels, they're those funny letters Pat Sajak makes you pay for? Moreover--

Arthur PASSES OUT.

GINNY

He didn't get to finish.

ADAMS

Hallelujah.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Ginny, Adams, Reverend Jax, Shep and Wayne are gathered over Arthur, who is passed out on a couch.

ADAMS

So what if the internet says he's a famous music professor? It could be wrong. If you search my name, Google auto-fills "Murderess."

SHEP

That's crazy. Just say 'murderer.' Why do women need a special word if they're killers?
(off her look)
Which you aren't. That anyone can prove.

REVEREND JAX

God is answering our prayers. We need a choir director, and he's one of the best in the world.

WAYNE

Personally, I think Ginny is doing a bang-up job as temporary director. Morale is up, fighting is down, and sexy is back.

GINNY

Wayne, that's very kind, but no amount of flattery is going to make me take you back.
(to group)
Everyone else, feel free to share your positive feedback. I cut four inches off my hair last week, it's starting to feel pretty aggressive that nobody's said anything.

Arthur groans and opens his eyes.

ARTHUR

(groans)
Is this hell? I guess I had that coming.

WAYNE

Look who decided to wake up. That was quite a bender you were on, Art.

ARTHUR

Arthur. How do you know my name?

SHEP

We looked through your wallet after we wrestled you out of your pants. You put up quite a fight. Luckily, I'm huge.

ARTHUR

Why-- what in the name of *Deliverance* did you do to me?

REVEAL Arthur is naked from the waist down, covered in a church banner that says "Believe!"

GINNY

Your pants got wet - not how you think. You went outside to relieve yourself, passed out in the bushes and a raccoon peed on you.

Arthur groans, the night coming back to him.

ARTHUR

I'm not supposed to be here.

ADAMS

Join the club. Ginny should be waiting tables at my restaurant, Shep should be milking his fancy goats, Reverend Jax should be writing a sermon and Wayne should be dead.

WAYNE

(shows scars)

It's true. I've been bitten by rattlers four times. Hazard of herpetology. That's the study of snakes, not--

ARTHUR

This has been fascinating. I'll take my pants and go.

He gathers the banner about him and stands.

GINNY

Wait! We're getting ready for a choir competition. We need your help. Think of it as community service.

ARTHUR

This was my wife's community, not mine. And I'm retired.

ADAMS

(reads from phone)

"A controversial figure known for his temper, Princeton's music department chair Arthur Cochran abruptly retired following a wave of student complaints." Sounds like you got fired.

ARTHUR

This is a generation of delicate snowflakes. A little criticism and they spend the rest of the day gently weeping into a craft beer.

GINNY

We've got thick skins. Our last director quit because he said we were committing "crimes against music"--

WAYNE

And because we couldn't pay him.

SHEP

(clarifying, offended)

In cash. Some people think they're too fancy to get paid in goat cheese.

Arthur grimaces. Unseen by Arthur, an 8-year-old boy, CASH, appears in the doorway holding a pair of pants. Ginny subtly shakes her head "no" at him.

GINNY

Give us twenty minutes. It'll be that long before your pants are dry.

ARTHUR

Fine. Twenty minutes to hear the death of music. How could I pass that up?

The choir excitedly gathers around the piano. Ginny approaches Cash, who holds the dry pants.

CASH

(re: pants)

Mama, you lied. In church.

Ginny takes a bottle of water and pours it on the pants.

GINNY

Did I? These pants don't seem dry
to me.

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Arthur wears a pair of bedazzled white-and-blue women's
sweatpants that say "Lady Wildcat" on the butt.

ARTHUR

Everyone in a circle. Shoulder to
shoulder, step in.

(to Shep)

Big guy, closer to Suzy Sunshine,
she's not gonna bite.

Shep blushes and steps closer to Ginny.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I sing, you sing.

(sings)

Laaaaaaaaaaa.

CHOIR

Laaaaaaaaaaa.

ARTHUR

Posture is everything. Imagine
there's a string attached to the
top of your head, and the rest of
you is dangling like a puppet.

REVEREND JAX

Like the wooden boy who comes to
life in the classic Disney movie,
Liars Die, Good Children Live.

ARTHUR

Do you mean *Pinocchio*?

GINNY

Reverend Jax is from Singapore.
They have different names for
American movies over there.

WAYNE

He's seen every movie Tom Hanks
ever made.

REVEREND JAX

I love him in *The Slow Man with Fast Legs*. But he's also very good in *Don't Get AIDS*.

ARTHUR

(can't even)

Let's try a chord.

(cuing different people)

Ceeeeeee. Eeeeeeeee. Geeeeeee.

CHOIR

C/E/Geeeeeeeeeeee.

ARTHUR

Close your eyes and listen.
Singing is about breathing together. It's a group of people so utterly in sync that you can't tell where one person starts and the other ends.

Shep opens an eye, sneaks a peek at Ginny, sees Arthur clock this and quickly shuts his eyes.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

We breathe in together, and on the exhale,
(singing)
as one we...

CHOIR

C/E/Geeeeeeeeeeee.

It's so much better. Eyes pop open in amazement.

WAYNE

Holy crap, it's black magic! I knew it was real. This guy's the devil, this is awesome!

GINNY

(to Arthur, showing arm)

Look! Goose bumps. It's a sign you were meant to help us.

ARTHUR

I don't believe in signs.

(noticing, out window)

Hey! That's my car! Don't tow that!

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur watches as a TOW TRUCK tows his car away. Ginny approaches.

GINNY

You don't believe in signs? How about the one that says, "No parking, tow zone?" What did you think was going to happen when you parked there?

ARTHUR

I was hoping I'd be dead and it wouldn't be my problem.

GINNY

Well, since death didn't take you, let me. To the breakfast place with the best biscuits in town.

INT. MOONBOW DAIRY - LATER

Arthur is at the counter. Adams shoves a plate of burnt toast at him.

ARTHUR

This is toast.

ADAMS

Yeah.

(pointed, to Ginny)

My best employee wasn't here to make more biscuits. She got caught up rescuing some drunk dumpster fire of a man.

GINNY

(elbows Adams, sotto)

A genius dumpster fire of a man who might help us so be nice.

ADAMS

I didn't get to be the gold crown in the mouth of this town by being nice.

(off her look)

Or by killing my husband.

GINNY

No one thinks you're a killer.

(to Arthur, whisper)

Everyone thinks that.

A man at the counter, PASTOR MAGNUS FILBURN (think Joel Osteen), offers his biscuit to Arthur.

MAGNUS

Take mine. It'd be a sin to leave the Moonbow without tasting one of these.

ARTHUR

You're giving me your biscuit?
What are you selling?

MAGNUS

Just God's love. But that's free, so I guess it's on the house, friend.

ARTHUR

Don't people in this town have any hobbies besides God? Try seeing a movie, or cooking meth.

MAGNUS

Both excellent ways to shake Satan's hand.

(to Ginny)

Ginger, you and your son have an open invitation to join my flock.

GINNY

Thank you, but my family's been at Second First since---

Ginny looks over at Cash, building a tower out of creamers and silverware in a booth. It CRASHES.

CASH

Son of a bee!

GINNY

Cash! Good job watching your language.

(to Arthur)

He got suspended for cussing out his teacher, so we're working on finding some new words to express frustration.

(to Cash)

I am so farming proud of you.

MAGNUS

I know the separation's been rough on the boy.

(MORE)

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

We offer counseling, and we could use your beautiful singing voice in the choir.

GINNY

You don't need me. Like your billboard says, you always win.

MAGNUS

None of us have truly won until we've gotten past Saint Peter. If you change your mind, everyone is welcome at Church of Perpetual Praise.

ARTHUR

Wait. The mega-church off I-75? My wife wasn't welcome.

MAGNUS

I don't believe we've met, and I know every member of my flock, large as it might be.

ARTHUR

Yeah, I'm not in your flocking flock.

GINNY

(to Cash)

Flocking, that's one.

ARTHUR

My wife grew up here. She moved away, like anyone who wanted a better life or a cell signal. Her final wish was to be buried in the cemetery of her childhood church -

(to Ginny and Adams)

It's the last place I'd choose but I wanted to honor her wishes-

(to Magnus)

But I was told there was a long waiting list, especially for "lapsed members." I didn't know God took attendance.

MAGNUS

You must be Mr. Cochran.

ARTHUR

Doctor Cochran.

MAGNUS

I received your seven angry
messages and your colorful
suggestions of what to stick where.

ARTHUR

You're still able to walk, so I
guess you didn't take them.

The pastor puts down money and rises to go.

MAGNUS

I hope you find peace.

Magnus exits.

ARTHUR

(to Ginny)

That guy's choir always wins?

GINNY

Yeah, it's a big selling point for
his church. Magnus says people
like to be on a winning team.

ARTHUR

Magnus would tell you God appeared
to him in a pancake if he thought
it would get him what he wanted.
How can you let him come in here
and rub it in your face?

GINNY

He's a customer, I can't tell him
off. What else am I supposed to
do?

ARTHUR

Beat him. This year, your choir is
going to win. Because I'm going to
help you.

GINNY

Really? I knew there was goodness
in your heart.

ARTHUR

I'm doing this out of spite.

GINNY

God works in mysterious ways.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM

Arthur and Ginny face Shep, Wayne, Adams, Reverend Jax and several other CHOIR MEMBERS.

GINNY

I am very excited to introduce you
to our new choir director-

ARTHUR

Temporary director.

GINNY

Dr. Arthur Cochran. Some of you
might know him as "the drunk who
yells about music." But he was
also a professor at Princeton
University.

(off blank looks)

I know, they never make the Final
Four, but outside of basketball
it's actually considered a good
school.

Arthur steps up to the Music Stand.

ARTHUR

We have three days to prepare for
this competition. Everyone scoot
together, you need to be able to
hear each other.

(to Shep)

That's right, all the way next to
(re: Adams)
"Making a Murderer."

ADAMS

Those allegations were not proven.

SHEP

Yet.

REVEREND JAX

No body, no crime. That is what
they say on the Dick Wolf procedure
show, "First Half Cops, Second Half
Lawyers."

ARTHUR

Huh. Accurate. Now, get your
spine in alignment.

(to Wayne)

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Nope, that's wrong. Stop puffing
out your chest to signal your wife
that you're ready to mate.

GINNY

Ex-wife.

WAYNE

Papers ain't signed yet.

GINNY

(to Arthur)

Um, could I have a quick word?

Ginny pulls Arthur aside for a private conversation.

GINNY (CONT'D)

I think it'd be best if you stick
to music and leave the personal
issues out of it.

ARTHUR

That's not how this works. It's all
intertwined. Take you. You slouch,
which hurts vocal projection.

Ginny straightens up, self-conscious.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

(one breath)

It's caused by poor posture and the
inability to face confrontation,
which is why you stayed married to
a man who's preparing for Wabbit
Season, probably for the sake of
your tiny sociopath, until one day
he crossed a line, maybe lost all
your money, maybe let a snake loose
in the house, I see from your eyes
it's both, wow, so you kicked him
out but now you're wracked with
guilt which is why you still have
unsigned divorce papers.

GINNY

You are scary.

ARTHUR

Thank you.

(to group)

I need to hear you individually.
Wait in the hall until it's your
turn to make my ears bleed.

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - MONTAGE

Choir members sing for Arthur as Ginny accompanies them.

- Adams belts, straining to reach a high note.

ARTHUR

Tuck your pelvis and get your ass
under it.

(off her failure)

The high notes aren't for you.

- Reverend Jax sings Pharrell's "Happy."

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

At least one of us is happy.

- Wayne sings enthusiastically but off-key, chewing gum.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

No chewing gum.

Wayne spits a wad of GUM into the offered cup.

WAYNE

I want that back at the end.

- Ginny sings "Amazing Grace."

ARTHUR

Don't smile, it reduces the
roundness of your sound.

Ginny tries unsuccessfully to obey.

- Shep mumbles, self-conscious, stealing glances at Ginny.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Come on, a big, barrel-chested guy
like you should be making a huge
sound. I bet your goats are louder
than you.

GINNY

Hey, Shep has a lot of wonderful
qualities that goats do not have.
Don't be mean.

ARTHUR

It's called honesty, and it's the
way people get better.

GINNY

Agree to disagree!
(noticing Cash fidget)
Cash, is that the wee-wee dance?

CASH

(yes)
No!

Ginny exits with Cash. Shep watches her go, wistfully.

ARTHUR

Good god, man, you can't stop
staring at her. Basic human
dignity. Just ask her out.

SHEP

I can't, out of respect for Wayne.
He's my best friend, my hunting
buddy-

ARTHUR

Let me guess, your first cousin.

SHEP

Third, once removed.

ARTHUR

(of course)
Kentucky. Look, if you can't speak
up in real life, that's between you
and the God I hear about on all
these bumper stickers. But in
choir, I need to hear you. Now
imagine your voice is a tiny ball
of light in your chest. Don't
force it. Just let it expand.
(sings)
Meeeeeeee.

SHEP

(sings, small)
Meeee.

ARTHUR

Your voice wants to be heard and
shared, like your feelings for
Ginny. Let it fill your heart,
then the room, then let it reach
all the way to the woods.

SHEP

(exponentially louder)
-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

ARTHUR

Yes! There's the sound.
(poor bastard)
You don't like her, you love her.

Through the window, Arthur glimpses his wife's headstone.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Nothing wrecks your life like love.

SHEP

What am I supposed to do?

ARTHUR

Ask her out. Or go commando when
you root for UK because your balls
are already solid blue.
(calls out)
Okay, everyone back in!

The rest of the choir returns and gathers around Arthur.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Homework: practice your harmonies,
visualize your posture and stop
drinking soda, it ruins your voice.

WAYNE

No gum, no Coke, what's next? No
smoking?

ARTHUR

(fed up)
You want the same results you've
always gotten, do the same thing.
You want change? Change. And yes,
cigarettes are out.

Arthur exits, frustrated. The choir looks at Wayne.

WAYNE

Where do we think he stands on
weed?

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

Arthur stands at his wife's grave. Her headstone has bars of
music engraved on it.

ARTHUR

I don't know if I can pull this off
without you, Jean. You were the one
with the patience. Probably
because you actually liked people.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That was your super power. Which reminds me, you still owe me a sign.

Reverend Jax approaches and stands with Arthur for a beat.

REVEREND JAX

Such a unique headstone. I've been meaning to ask, what is the significance of the music?

ARTHUR

Just a fun reminder that she's dead and will never sing again.

REVEREND JAX

I see I've upset you. Forgive me.

Reverend Jax starts to leave. Arthur sighs.

ARTHUR

It's how we'd find each other in a crowd. One of us would whistle the first part and the other would whistle back. Family tradition. My parents used Bach's Toccata in G minor, but Jean said if she had to do something so ridiculous, at least it should be fun.

(re: music, mortified)

That's "Eye of the Tiger."

REVEREND JAX

She was the Adrian to your Rocky?

ARTHUR

No, she was like Mickey, the trainer, kicking my ass and calling me on my crap. And before you open your mouth, I don't need to know the title of Rocky in Singapore.

REVEREND JAX

It's Rocky. What else would it be?

Arthur looks to the headstone, summoning patience.

ARTHUR

Just practice your harmonies, please.

INT. GINNY'S KITCHEN - LATER

Ginny cooks as Cash does homework.

CASH

Why do I have to go to school? I
could be a cook at the Moonbow,
then we could hang out all day.

GINNY

You go to school so you can get a
better job than mine.

SHEP (O.S.)

(sings)

*I dream of Ginny with the light
brown hair.*

GINNY

What on earth?

She goes to the window, through which we see:

Shep serenades her in the yard. Behind him are GOATS, each
with a helium BALLOON tied to its neck. The balloons spell
out "DATE ME."

GINNY (CONT'D)

Oh my.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ginny hurriedly approaches Shep.

GINNY

Shep, what is this?

SHEP

Ten years ago, I didn't speak up,
and it was the biggest mistake of
my life. Ginger Elizabeth, will
you please go out with me?

GINNY

You're asking me on a date?

SHEP

Yes. I mean, not this instant.
Unless... is this instant good?
I'm not doing anything - just need
a quick 45 to get the goats home
and fed.

GINNY

Does Wayne know you're here?

SHEP

Not yet, but--

GINNY

We can't go out. Don't get me wrong, I'm flattered, but Wayne would blow a gasket! You are his best friend, possibly his cousin, and I am his wife.

SHEP

Ex-wife.

GINNY

Not until he signs the papers.

SHEP

But once the papers are signed?

GINNY

I don't know, it's complicated.

CASH (O.S.)

What's "Eat Me D"?

REVEAL Cash, watching the jumbled goats mill about.

GINNY

Nothing. Go inside. Mommy and Shep are having adult time with the goats.

(realizing)

That goes straight in the school therapist's little notebook.

Cash exits. Ginny turns to Shep.

GINNY (CONT'D)

You need to forget this idea.

SHEP

I can't. Arthur was right: I have to live my truth and tell my story, my way. Me, Shep.

GINNY

Arthur put this in your head?

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - LATER

Arthur drinks bourbon. Suddenly, his boat begins ROCKING.

EXT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - A MOMENT LATER

Arthur comes out on deck to find Ginny jumping on his deck.

ARTHUR

What are you doing?

GINNY

Me? I'm rocking the boat. You know - disrupting a delicate balance so that everything goes cattywampus and suddenly your husband's best friend is singing love songs in your yard?!

ARTHUR

He used his voice. Good for him.

GINNY

And bad for me. Ever since Wayne and I split, my son has been a wreck. I need Wayne to sign the divorce papers so everything will settle down and Cash can start healing. That won't happen if Shep makes Wayne jealous, so you need to stop stirring the pot, Paula Deen.

ARTHUR

(appraising)

Shoulders back, head up, fire in the belly. Bring this girl to choir practice, we've got a shot at winning.

GINNY

I'm not joking.

ARTHUR

Neither am I.

Ginny heads to her truck. As she goes:

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

How'd you know where I live?

GINNY

It's a small town. They call this "Angry Yankee Cove."

EXT. LAKE/INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - MORNING

As the sun rises, Arthur stumbles out of bed to the kitchen. In his barren pantry, there's a lone box of cereal. He tips it into a bowl: nothing. Arthur groans.

INT. MOONBOW DAIRY - MORNING

Ginny is behind the counter. Arthur sits.

ARTHUR

Okay, I'm ready to try one of those famous biscuits.

GINNY

We're out.

ARTHUR

It's seven AM.

GINNY

We open at three for the hunters. At four, the fishermen come in; at five, the farmers, six, the factory workers, so by seven there's nothing left for the interfering busybodies.

ARTHUR

A great man is never understood in his own time.

Pastor Magnus approaches to pay his bill.

MAGNUS

Ginger, you've been in my prayers. You and Miley Cyrus. Have you given any more thought to joining the winning choir?

ARTHUR

She's already in one. Save your prayers for your hairline.

MAGNUS

I am trying to be patient because you're dealing with serious loss--

ARTHUR

So are you. Your hair. Did you find a spot to bury it? I hear that cemetery is hard to get into. Unless your hair gave a lot of money to the church.

MAGNUS

Jean always liked the self-righteous blowhards.

ARTHUR

You didn't know my wife, did you
know my wife?

MAGNUS

Back when she was Jeannie Dodson.
She and I used to skip church -
don't tell my congregation - and
play hide and seek in the cemetery.
That's where we had our first kiss.
But I'm sure she had other reasons
for wanting to be buried there.

Magnus leaves his money and crosses out. Arthur steams.

GINNY

(overly gentle)
You want more coffee?

ARTHUR

I don't want your coffee or your
pity. I want to see the look on
that smug bastard's face when we
win.

CHOIR

(prelap)
King of Kings! Forever, and ever!

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - LATER

Arthur conducts furiously, a man possessed.

ARTHUR

Stop! Adams, you're in the wrong
section. You're an alto.

ADAMS

I am a soprano. I have never sung
alto.

ARTHUR

Yeah, well, as women get older,
their voices get lower.

ADAMS

(bleeped)
The fuck you say?

GINNY

Can I have a word?

Ginny pulls Arthur to the side.

GINNY (CONT'D)

This is important to Adams. I know the alto part. We can swap. No big deal.

ARTHUR

It is a big deal. To win, we need the right voices singing the right parts.

Ginny's PHONE rings.

GINNY

That's Cash's school, sorry.

As she takes the call, Arthur turns back to the choir.

ADAMS

The problem isn't me, it's the song. It's too high.

REVEREND JAX

A pop song might be a better way to connect with the audience. Like that movie about a *cappella* groups, *White People Sing Black Music With Perfect Pitch*.

ARTHUR

No. Hallelujah Chorus is the way to win. Shockingly, you had that part right before I got here.

GINNY

(hangs up phone)
I have to leave.

ARTHUR

What? No. We need every second of practice we can get. Honestly, that probably won't even be enough.

GINNY

There was a situation at school. Cash may have slightly punched a kid in his reading group--

ARTHUR

Based on what I've seen, there is always a "situation" with Cash, so that's not a reason to leave, though no one said good decisions were your strong suit.

GINNY

Excuse me?

ARTHUR

No, that's the point, I don't. On your own time, feel free to have any self-destructive delusions you want:

(to Ginny)

Your child is a font of untapped greatness, a veritable vein of coal ready to turn into diamonds.

(to Adams)

You are a nubile ingenue who definitely did not commit homicide.

(to Jax)

Your communication skills are spreading the good word loud and clear.

(to Wayne re: Shep)

Your friend-slash-roommate-slash-third-uncle-once-removed definitely doesn't intend to bone your wife.

The choir reacts, offended and upset.

WAYNE

You want to bone my sweet Ginny?

SHEP

No! I mean, yes, but I would never do anything until the divorce was finalized.

WAYNE

Well, that'll happen on the 32nd of Never, a day and a month that don't exist because that's when I'll sign those papers.

Amid the chaos, a deeply hurt Ginny turns to Arthur.

GINNY

Get out. You're not welcome.

ARTHUR

At least you're finally being honest.

Arthur leaves.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - LATER

Cash enters Arthur's living room cautiously. Singing comes from behind a door.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
(sings)
*I get weary, and sick of trying.
I'm tired of living, and scared of
dying, but old man river--*

Cash opens the bathroom door, startling Arthur, who's peeing.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Gah!

Arthur slams the door.

ARTHUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't you knock? What are you doing here?

CASH
I need to lay low. My mom's mad at me, but she's way more mad at you. I figure there's no way she's coming here.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
Can't fault your logic.

Arthur emerges from the bathroom as Cash picks up a BUTTERFLY FIGURINE.

CASH
What's up with you and butterflies?

ARTHUR
My wife liked them, put it down.

CASH
My mom says you're like the Grinch. You say you hate people, but really you hate being alone. And you get mad about singing.

ARTHUR
Yeah, well, the Grinch's wife wanted to spend her final weeks in the place she was born. And then she was gone and he had nothing.

CASH

No, he had a dog. He was way ahead of you.

ARTHUR

With such tact and social grace, it's a shock you get into fights at school. Your mom said this happened during reading?

CASH

Everyone laughs and calls me stupid. Then I punch them.

Arthur takes this in, a question forming in his mind.

ARTHUR

Let's try a little experiment. I sing something, you sing it back.

(sings)

Dona Nobis Pacem.

CASH

(sings, perfectly)

Dona Nobis Pacem.

ARTHUR

Good. That's Latin for "don't stop by unannounced."

(re: sheet music)

These are the words. Let's sing them again. You follow along with your finger. Ready?

Arthur places Cash's finger at the start of the words.

ARTHUR/CASH

(sing)

Dona Nobis Pacem. Dona Nobis Pacem.

As they sing, Cash's finger zig-zags over the page, seemingly at random. Arthur realizes what he's dealing with.

ARTHUR

That's what I thought. Come on.

CASH

Where are we going?

ARTHUR

The Grinch has to go into Whoville.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE - LATER

Arthur and Cash get out of the car. Ginny embraces Cash.

GINNY

Don't you ever run off like that,
do you hear?

(to Arthur, cold)

Thank you for returning my son, so
I can continue being a terrible
role model for him.

ARTHUR

About that--

GINNY

You think being kind makes me weak,
but it takes strength. You want
reality? The night we met, a
raccoon didn't pee on you, you peed
your own pants.

CASH

(to Arthur, in solidarity)

I did that until first grade.

GINNY

Did I choose being nice over being
honest? Yes. Because in that
moment, you needed love. And I
will always make that choice. It's
not a character defect, it's a
flocking super power.

This hits home with Arthur.

ARTHUR

You're right.

GINNY

Oh, "I'm right," of course you'd
make a-- wait, I'm right?

ARTHUR

Don't be so shocked, it's bound to
happen occasionally. But you can't
wrap every problem in a hug and
send it off on a moonbeam. Take
Rosemary's Baby here. He's getting
into fights because he has trouble
reading. When he looks at a book,
the letters float around and
rearrange themselves.

CASH

Like the goat balloons.

ARTHUR

Kid's got dyslexia. A lot of
successful people have had it.
Yeats, Churchill, German composer
Richard Strauss.

(sighs, off blank stare)

Tom Cruise.

GINNY

Tom Cruise?! So I didn't ruin him
by getting a divorce?

ARTHUR

No. This isn't your fault.

Ginny cries tears of happiness, hugs Cash, then Arthur.
Arthur awkwardly tolerates the hug.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Okay, then. I'm going.

CASH

Stay for dinner.

ARTHUR

You're busy... crying, I don't want
to intrude.

GINNY

That's what friends do. They butt
in, and keep showing up, even when
we yell at them to go away.

ARTHUR

That's also what stalkers and
serial killers do.

GINNY

Just come in, already.

Arthur does.

INT. GINNY'S KITCHEN - LATER

Arthur, Ginny and Cash sit. Ginny passes a platter of
biscuits to Arthur.

ARTHUR

A whole plate of biscuits? Even
though I didn't get up early to
hunt the fish or milk the snakes?

GINNY

You think you're joking, but it's possible to milk a snake.

ARTHUR

How-- no, I don't want to know.
(tasting biscuit)
Oh, wow, that's good.

CASH

The trick is to massage the venom glands--

ARTHUR

(mouth full)
Don't ruin this for me!

INT. FESTIVAL AUDITORIUM - SEATS - DAY

Adams, Reverend Jax, Shep, Wayne and other choir members watch as PERPETUAL PRAISE CHOIR sings. The crowd loves it.

ADAMS

We're toast.

Arthur, Ginny and Cash approach.

ARTHUR

They're loud. It's not the same as being good.

The choir reacts to Arthur.

WAYNE

What's he doing here?

GINNY

We had a nice talk, and Arthur apologized.

ADAMS

To you, not to us. I don't share appetizers or apologies.

GINNY

Well, I think we should forgive him and welcome him back.

WAYNE

You know, that's an important lesson in choirs and in marriages.

GINNY

(surprising backbone)

Wayne, enough! I'm not changing my mind, so you need to suck it up, sign the papers and get all nine snakes out of the garage.

(to group)

Everyone else, whatever petty grudge you're carrying, drop it. We have the chance to come together and do something amazing, and

(re: Arthur)

he's part of that. This crusty, unpleasant man who's so difficult he got rejected by a graveyard. And lucky for us he did, because we take anyone, no matter how low, how hated or despised--

ARTHUR

Okay, you've made your point.

(to choir)

My wife used to accuse me of liking everything about choirs except that they're full of people. I forgot, in trying to improve your voices, that they belong to actual humans. I'm sorry. So, what do you say we make some heavenly music and shove it in those jerks' faces!

INT. FESTIVAL AUDITORIUM - STAGE - LATER

A smiling choir faces Arthur. He raises his baton, commanding and confident, and cues them:

CHOIR

(sings)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

It's the best they've ever sounded, and they know it. The crowd sits forward, amazed - this is actually good!

CHOIR (CONT'D)

For the Lord God omnipotent
reigneth. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Arthur beams at Ginny. She smiles back.

GINNY

(sotto)

Brace yourself.

ARTHUR
(sotto)
Why?

GINNY
(sotto)
We're rocking the boat.

Suddenly, the music CHANGES. Arthur reacts as the choir launches into "Eye of the Tiger":

CHOIR
*It's the eye of the tiger, it's the
thrill of the fight. Rising up to
the challenge of our rival. And the
last known survivor stalks his prey
in the night. And he's watching us
all through the eye of the tiger!*

The surprise mash-up is a hit with the crowd. Arthur resists then gives in to conducting the pop music. It switches back:

CHOIR (CONT'D)
*King of Kings! Forever! And Ever!
And Lord of Lords! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!*

And back to "Eye of the Tiger":

CHOIR (CONT'D)
*Rising up, straight to the top.
Had the guts, got the glory. Went
the distance, now I'm not gonna
stop. Just a man and his will to
survive!*

As the music builds, Ginny makes eye contact with Cash, who peeks from behind the risers. She gives him a thumbs-up.

ANGLE ON: Cash, behind the risers. He unscrews the lid of a large jar, releasing something we can't see.

CHOIR (CONT'D)	CHOIR (CONT'D)
<i>And the last known survivor stalks his prey in the night. And he's watchin' us all with the eye of the tiger.</i>	<i>King of Kings! And Lord of Lords! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!</i>

As the music reaches an exuberant musical climax, a kaleidoscope of BUTTERFLIES bursts into the air behind the choir. The crowd roars with delight.

The only person not making noise is Arthur. He's so gobsmacked that he forgets to conduct.

ARTHUR

It's about damn time, Jean.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SEATS - LATER

The choir waits nervously as an EMCEE announces results.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Third place... Central Christian Church.

SHEP

Hey, Arthur, earlier you kinda froze and got a weird look on your face. Were you having a stroke? Who knows the signs of a stroke?

REVEREND JAX

You smell burnt toast.

WAYNE

Can't feel your wiener.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Second place, Kirk of the Valley.

ADAMS

Take an aspirin, just in case.
(off everyone's surprise)
What? I don't like the man but I don't want him dead.

SHEP

That's what I'd say if I was a murderess.

ARTHUR

I'm fine. I just saw something there was no way to explain.

GINNY

You mean a miracle?

ARTHUR

More like a hallucination.

GINNY

God works in mysterious ways.

EMCEE (O.S.)
First place... Perpetual Praise
Church.

The choir members react, disappointed, as Pastor Magnus
accepts a trophy, showboating with a victory dance.

ARTHUR
I am proud of all of you. Those
judges are tone-deaf, mouth-
breathing troglodytes who have no
capacity--

EMCEE
And this year, the judges
unanimously agreed to create a new
award - "Most Improved Choir," to
Second First Church of the
Cumberlands.

Arthur is crushed in a mosh pit of hugs and screams.

ARTHUR
Discernment, that's what they have.
A good eye for talent.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - ANOTHER DAY

Arthur stands at his wife's grave, holding the trophy.

ARTHUR

The butterflies were a nice touch.
You don't have to say if it was
you. But it was, right?

(re: trophy)

"Most Improved," talk about an
understatement. I deserve the
Nobel for "preventing musical
genocide." You saw the
transformation. In three days I
got in their heads. Think what I
could do with more time. They
already worship me.

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - SAME

Ginny, Adams, Shep, Wayne and Reverend Jax watch Arthur
through the window.

ADAMS

The man's off his rocker.

REVEREND JAX

It's common for someone who's
grieving to talk to the other side.
Like in M. Night Shyamalan's famous
movie: *Bruce Willis, He's Dead Too*.

SHEP

You think he's gonna stick around?

GINNY

Yep. Whether he knows it or not,
he's been lost and now he's found.

WAYNE

So you don't need me to do the
thing where we get his car towed
again?

REVEREND JAX

You did that? I thought it was
divine intervention.

GINNY

God helps those who help
themselves.

EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - SAME

Arthur continues to talk to his wife's grave.

ARTHUR

It would be quite a challenge, to
take this raw clay and mold it, but
on the other hand, Yale might have--

CHOIR (O.S.)

(sings)

*Requiem Eeee-tur-nam, Donuh Hay-
ees, Nomuhnay--*

ARTHUR

Are you kidding? That's not even
close!

He strides to the church with a head of steam.

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur bursts in and cuts off the choir mid-song.

ARTHUR

Dona Eis Nomine, not "Donut Hey-Sis
No Money"! Start over. Adams,
you're an alto, get in the right
section!

Off Ginny's satisfied smile...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW