The Big Kiss-Off: A Musical Noir

by

Rachel Sakry

This thesis is completed as a partial requirement for the degree Master of Arts University of Portland in Portland Oregon.
Approved:
Roger Q Dayle Date 28 Apr 2008 Chairperson
Roger O. Doyle D.M.A. Professor of Music Committee Member Date 4/28/08
John Paul, D.M.A. Adjunct Professor of Music Committee Member Date 4/10/200
Richard Bower, M.A. Adjunct Professor of Music
Approved: Roger Q Doyle Graduate Program Director Roger O. Doyle D.M.A. Professor of Music Approved: 28 Apr 2008 Date:
Man Inv 208 Dean of the Unit Date:
Dean of the Unit Rev. Stephen C. Rowan Ph.D. Light Stephen 2 July 2008
Dean, Graduate School Thomas G. Greene, Ed.D.

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Acknowledgments

One of the things I love about musical theatre is that it is a collaborative art form. I've had the honor of working with many wonderful collaborators on this project. Jason Ferté has taught me so much about storytelling and theatre-making and has provided me with many opportunities for creative growth. Robert Fishel brought my music to life with enthusiasm, intelligence, and understanding; I was honored by and grateful for his dedication to the project. Ky Fifer brought his formidable voice, presence, and sense of humor to the character of Jimmy; it was a pleasure to hear him sing the role. All of the performers were so generous with their time and talents: Bri Caldwell, Kate Conroy-Yockim, Zach Faltersack, Dustin Grote, David Harell, Jamie Hettenbach, Kory Keeney, Amanda Myers, Isaac Rains, Emily Rico, Kolleen Uppinghouse, Audrey Voon, Andrew Wade, Teige Weidner, and Pam Wellner.

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Introduction

In the summer of 2005, after the premiere of our first musical, Whatever Girl, I asked my partner, Jason Ferté, to write me a script that would appeal to a high school theatre department. (There are things about Whatever Girl that would make it a great high school production – a large ensemble cast with interesting roles for both men and women, for example – but the script is full of salty language and sex, making it a hard sell to high school theatre directors.) Jason met my request with a script called Make Believe, about three friends who go off on three separate adventures and reunite to discover how each of them has grown and changed. The story had some nice moments in it, but ultimately it didn't move me; as much as I wanted it to, I didn't care about the characters. Jason's next project was Damned: A Musical Noir, a script far darker and dirtier than Whatever Girl. In fact, it made our first musical look like a Disney movie. Nonetheless, the story spoke to me – I loved the characters and cared about what happened to them. This was a libretto I needed to set. And although it was definitely not a high school show, it did fulfill another request I'd made of Jason: after the standard scene-and-song format of Whatever Girl, I wanted to try my hand at something a little more through-composed. Damned offered that opportunity, with "songs" that encompass entire scenes, sections of recitative, and extensive underscoring.

The story centers on Jimmy Hawkins, a burned-out detective with a slightly tarnished heart of gold. When a new client, Irene, hires him to search for her missing brother, Shane, Jimmy ventures into an underground world of seedy nightclubs in order to track him down. Along the way, he meets and falls in love with Lyla, an associate of Shane's. With this new love comes the possibility that Jimmy will finally be able to let go of Kathy, a past love who has been haunting him for years. Meanwhile, the case goes from bad to worse, and Jimmy finally calls it quits, but

not before Lyla is killed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jimmy's pursuit for revenge leads him back to Irene, who reveals her true identity and motivation for finding Shane: she's not his sister; she was really looking for her errant daughter, Val, a mysterious creature with a voracious appetite for human flesh. Irene correctly guessed that Shane, a famous porn star, would become one of Val's victims, and that a search for Shane would lead to Val. Having learned all this, Jimmy becomes Val and Irene's next victim.

My thesis recital consisted of the music of <u>Damned</u> – songs, underscoring, and scene change cues – with narration to tie it all together. The narration has a somewhat lighter tone than the script, so Jason decided that this "concert version" of the show should have its own title, to better reflect its mood – hence, <u>The Big Kiss-Off</u>.

The Process

The first scoring decision I made was the vocal range for each character. Because of his gruff nature, I thought that Jimmy should be a baritone. I originally wrote his songs in this range, but transposed them up when we cast Ky Fifer in the role. Ky is a dramatic tenor; his voice has a rich, snarly tone that's a great fit for Jimmy. The other singing male character, Shane, is a vain playboy – he seemed like a lyric tenor.

There are four singing female roles in <u>Damned</u>: Val, Irene, Lyla, and Kathy. Val is bratty and girlish; I heard her as an alto with a nasal or brassy tone. Irene, on the other hand, is prim and proper, nervous and high-strung – a definite soprano. Lyla is sensual and womanly, so I imagined her as an alto with a full, rich voice. Kathy is quiet and shy, not someone who goes to extremes – and so, neither does her vocal range: I thought of her as a mezzo-soprano. As it turned out, these range designations are almost conceptual rather than practical; all of the women's vocal parts are within a range narrow enough that any of the roles could be sung by just about any voice type.

As I was deciding on vocal ranges, I also started thinking about instrumentation. I heard the score of <u>Damned</u> as having a dark, reedy sound, so I wanted to use accordion, clarinet, and tenor saxophone. Junk percussion seemed like a good signature sound for the Infernal Beings, the ominous dancing creatures who perform the scene changes. I didn't make any final decisions about the band at this stage, though. When scoring <u>Whatever Girl</u>, I settled on the instrumentation beforehand and orchestrated the songs as I wrote them. This time, I wanted to try the opposite approach: write piano-vocal versions of the songs first, and orchestrate later. It seemed more practical to do it this way; it meant that I could score the songs based on which musicians would be available for the performance. Early on, I had hoped that a local chamber

music group called the Music Population Orchestra would serve as the <u>Damned</u> band, because I felt the music I was writing had an affinity with the material they perform, and because I liked the idea of using a preexisting group of musicians. Having a band made up of people who already know one another and work well together seemed like a good way to streamline the rehearsal process. As it turns out, the MPO wasn't available, but I held onto the idea of using preexisting groups when recruiting UP students for the recital – among the performers are two music groups active on campus: a clarinet trio and an a cappella quartet.

Stephen Sondheim has commented that he finds it easier to write through-composed songs than to use standard forms: "To write a thirty-two-bar song that has freshness and style to it and tells the story is really hard....[I]t's much easier to write extended arioso stuff than it is to write songs" (qtd. in Horowitz 19-20). Although I take Sondheim's point that it's difficult to write something unique or exceptional within the constraints of the thirty-two-bar form, to do something at least adequate, something that works, is much simpler when the structure is set and familiar. Without a predetermined structure, the freedom of choice can be overwhelming, and the number of decisions that need to be made in the process of composing is exponentially greater, slowing down the process considerably. It took me about a year to write "Ow, My Head," but "Tell Me" was finished in an evening.

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I've been reading about the film scoring process, and it has informed my process in a couple of ways. When I made a composing schedule for myself, I broke it down in terms of how many minutes of music I needed to write, which, for me, was a new way of thinking about composing. When I started working on the underscoring for the Pony Room scenes, I wrote the longest cue

first, since, as film composer Jeff Rona points out in his book, <u>The Reel World</u>, shorter cues can be excerpted from longer ones. I've also been inspired by the accounts I've read of film score recording sessions, where if a particular music cue isn't sounding right, someone – the composer, orchestrator, or music editor – will make changes on the fly. This has made me more aware of and open to the possibility of trying things out in rehearsal. During one of the first vocal rehearsals, I decided to change a pitch in one of the vocal lines – a small thing, but not something I would have felt empowered to do before now.

There are many places in the score where I chose to restate musical materials for specific dramatic reasons. It was interesting to discover, though, that I could also rely on my subconscious to lend coherence to the score. I've read about this phenomenon in accounts of other people's creative processes, but it was the first time I was aware of it in my own work. Going through my notebook recently, I found motivic ideas in some of my earliest sketches for Damned (such as the three-against-two chordal figure associated with Jimmy) that I had forgotten having written, but that nonetheless resurfaced in later versions of the songs. When Rob Fishel, our musical director, pointed out that the first four notes of "Tell Me" bear a striking resemblance to the Infernal Being motif, I couldn't remember if it was an intentional reference or not – but I suppose I can take credit for it either way, conscious or subconscious.

When Jason and I began discussing the idea of writing a more through-composed show,

Stephen Sondheim's <u>Passion</u> was one of our main reference points. We both liked how dialogue flowed into song, and how the songs felt like monologues. Jason structured his lyrics for <u>Damned</u> in a similar way – like conversations or inner monologues, with a linear rather than a

cyclical feel. There are interesting plot parallels between the two shows as well: both are about a man who finds himself suddenly swept up by events beyond his control when a new woman enters his life. This "femme fatale" strips him of everything he thought he was, leaving him physically and psychologically transformed. In particular, the opening scene of <u>Damned</u> echoes that of <u>Passion</u>, a bedroom scene between two lovers.

The Music

"Wow" (Val and Shane)

The opening number is a duet between Val and Shane, who are negotiating the terms of their sexual encounter, in progress. This song features the full band: three clarinets, tenor sax, percussion, piano, violin, viola, and bass. Val's vocal line is in the lower part of the alto range, while Shane's is in the higher part of the tenor range, so their harmonies are close, sometimes crossing. The melody of "Wow," although vocally conceived, is generally asymmetrical in structure – particularly in the first part of the song, when the two singers are in dialogue. Shane and Val each have a solo section in the latter part of the song; these melodies are more symmetrical.

Like most of the music of <u>Damned</u>, the harmonies of "Wow" are tertian and quasi-functional. After a cacophonous introduction, the song settles into B-flat major, with a series of four chords (iii⁷-ii⁷-IV⁷-I⁷) repeated three times before a fifth chord is added at the end of the pattern – an altered dominant chord with a major seventh. This five-chord series repeats throughout the rest of the first section, with changing harmonic rhythm and occasional interruptions.

The entire song is characterized by interruptions, including frequent changes of tempo and meter. These changes coincide with the characters' shifting moods. The song's form is probably best described as sectional. It's not strictly through-composed; the material beginning at measure 75 reoccurs starting at measure 142, for example.

"Ow, My Head" (Jimmy and Irene)

"Ow, My Head" takes place in Jimmy's office, where he is awakened from his post-drinking slumber by a knock at the door. As Irene explains her case, Jimmy is lost in his own thoughts.

This song features the full band but is largely driven by the piano. (The orchestrated piano part is almost identical to the original piano-vocal version, with the rest of the band doubling the piano, or adding filigree.) Jimmy's melody, although vocally conceived, has a jagged contour, with frequent leaps and occasional chromaticism, meant to convey his erratic state of mind.

The song's first verse is in D minor, alternating between i and V⁶₅, but modulates to E minor for the second verse through a series of secondary dominant chords. Here, the chords alternate between i and IV⁶₄; another series of transitional chords follows. The third verse (rehearsal letter A) breaks from the pattern established by the first two in several ways. There is a subtle shift in texture: the left hand of the piano part switches from full triads to open octaves. This verse uses more chromatic material, and quartal harmonies alternate with tertian chords. These changes reflect a shift in lyrical focus: whereas the first two verses deal with matters directly at hand ("Ow, my head..." and "Okay, who is she?"), the third verse delves into Jimmy's inner life and desires ("I need a vacation..."). A brief spoken exchange with Irene pulls Jimmy out of his reverie and back into the matters at hand; the harmonies of the fourth verse (rehearsal letter B) reflect this with a return to the opening key of D minor.

In the next section of the song (rehearsal letters C and D), Jimmy reminisces about his past ("I used to care about strangers..."). This section is in D Mixolydian/major and features a descending bass line that works its way from tonic down to dominant. Toward the end of this section, an abrupt shift in tonal center (to A major/minor) and harmonic rhythm (from four or eight beats to one beat) accompanies the lyric "stabbed and shot and clubbed." Following another spoken exchange with Irene is a return to key areas and harmonies from the first part of the song.

The overall form of "Ow, My Head" is roughly ABA. More specifically, it looks like this:

A				В		A'			
а	b	a'	a''	c	d	h'	a'"	e	a'"'

The first A section is in an uptempo 2/4 time; the B section has a broader feel, in 4/4 and 3/4. The second A section returns to the 2/4 feel.

"I Wonder If He Heard Me" (Irene)

This brief solo song, scored for voice and accordion in a slow, rubato 4/4, serves as a sort of coda to the previous number. The lyrics are an inner monologue, linear and unmetered; the melody is asymmetrical and largely scalar. Two pairs of alternating chords recur throughout: first Am/C and B7(no3), then C and Em/B. This harmonic vacillation reveals Irene's uncertainty about Jimmy. Although the melody is through-composed, the harmonic structure has a form of ABA'B'.

"Perhaps I Should Explain" (Irene and Jimmy)

In this song, Irene returns to Jimmy's office to clarify some things about her case. The strings provide the main accompaniment, with clarinet echoing or harmonizing with the vocal line, and piano filling out the bass line during the middle section. As in her other numbers, Irene's vocal melody is largely stepwise and conservative, illustrating her anxious, uptight demeanor. The song begins and ends with Irene's signature harmonies, as heard in "I Wonder If He Heard Me." The gradually shifting chords, outlined by long, held notes in the strings, underscore Irene's description of her relationship with her brother, Shane. The middle section of the song enters a new key area, E minor, outlined by a two-bar bass ostinato. This section has a more staccato feel, to go with Irene's prickly explanation of her family's financial arrangements. The overall form,

then, is ABA', although in this case the A sections feel like an introduction and a coda, respectively, while the B section makes up the bulk of the song.

Hott Stuff Productions (Orchestra)

This number underscores a scene in the reception area of Shane's place of employment. Like much of the underscoring in the show, it serves a dual purpose, as both source music and dramatic commentary. Intended to have a sort of "muzak" vibe, it's downtempo 4/4 funk in A Dorian minor twelve-bar blues form, featuring tenor sax, violin, piano, bass, and cowbell. The melodies, played by violin and saxophone, are fairly symmetrical, in keeping with the form. The violin line is characterized by long held notes and chromatic slides. The entrance of the saxophone is intended to coincide with Lyla's entrance onstage; the sax line borrows material from the Pony Room music (see chapter 14, below), which also serves as Lyla's theme. The number begins on the fifth bar of the twelve-bar blues pattern, to indicate that Jimmy is hearing a piece of music already in progress when he enters the Hott Stuff Productions office. Similarly, the music ends on bar eight of the form, as Jimmy exits while the music continues on, unheard by our protagonist.

"What Is This?" (Jimmy)

In Jimmy's second song, he reacts to meeting Lyla for the first time. It features the full band, but much like "Ow, My Head," it's mainly driven by the piano. Jimmy's vocal line is again characterized by frequent leaps, until the final section, where it becomes more stepwise and lyrical. "What Is This?" is in 6/8 throughout, but with frequent use of a 3/4 hemiola feel. This push-pull between three and two is meant to convey Jimmy's resistance to his feelings for Lyla.

The song begins in Bb major with a six-bar introduction on a dominant pedal tone, leading into the tonic harmony that underpins the first half of the first verse. The harmonic rhythm speeds up in the second half of the verse, moving from ii to iii to IV and back before settling back into tonic. Each succeeding verse follows a similar harmonic pattern. A key change to A Phrygian heralds the second verse (rehearsal letter B); this change in mood corresponds to the lyrical content. Whereas in the first verse, Jimmy tries to dismiss his feelings for Lyla by attributing them to baser urges ("I know what lust is – This is nothing"), the second verse finds him wanting to deny his feelings for fear of getting hurt ("I know what heartache is – And I've had my fill of it"). The following section (rehearsal letter C) centers on G Dorian; we then move to Eb major for the remainder of the song, where Jimmy finally gives in to his feelings, admitting he's in love. (Even so, the song ends on a "sour note," with an altered submediant harmony rather than the tonic. Jimmy may be in love, but he's not exactly happy about it.)

The form of "What Is This?" is as follows:

m.1-6	m.7-26	m.27-45	m.46-63	m.64-71	m.72-96
Intro	Verse 1	Verse 2	Bridge	Trans.	Verse 3 (w/extension)
	+8+8+2(+2)	+8+8+2(+1)		+8	+4+4+5+2+1+3+2+2

"I Used to Volunteer" (Kathy)

Jimmy dreams of his late love, Kathy, who tells her story in this monologue/song. Although it features the full band, it's mainly carried by the winds. Written in 4/4, it feels more like a slow two. Kathy's melody is largely scalar and somewhat asymmetrical, in short phrases of two or three measures. In D Mixolydian, this song is harmonically quite static; the two main recurring

chords, D7sus and a quintal chord based on C, contain the exact same pitches, just in different inversions. The form is as follows:

The two-bar transition at the end leads directly into scene change music, to be discussed later (see chapter 20).

The Iguana (Orchestra)

This number underscores a nightclub scene; it features the winds, accordion, bass, and percussion. Like the Hott Stuff "muzak," it is intended to serve as both source music and dramatic underscoring. The Iguana music has a techno feel, in a slow but rhythmically dense 4/4. The first nine bars of the piece take place while Jimmy and another character, Toots, are standing outside the nightclub; thus, only the low-end instruments, bass and tom-tom, are heard. The bass establishes a four-bar pattern in F (Dorian) minor. The entrance of the winds in measure ten is meant to coincide with the characters' entrance into the club. The clarinets have running sixteen note patterns that combine to create a diatonic cluster spanning F to C. The saxophone begins with a sparse quarter note melody, and then goes into a syncopated sixteenth note figure harmonized by accordion.

The clarinets and bass drop out abruptly at measure 19 (rehearsal letter C); this is meant to coincide with the entrance of evil henchwomen Mopsa and Dorcas, as their theme is heard on accordion. The middle section of the piece (measures 21-24) enters a new key area, G Phrygian,

with the bass continuing its four-bar pattern a step higher. The percussion takes over on sixteenth note duty, freeing up the winds for a more legato melody and accompaniment. In measure 25, the clarinets' sixteenth note figure returns; a bar later, an ominous tritone swell from the accordion, sax, and bass announces Val's entrance. The sense of foreboding continues with a D pedal tone, and the music segues into "Going Down."

"Going Down" (Infernal Beings)

The Infernal Beings, who have been dancing their way through the set changes and doing bit parts during the scenes, finally get a song of their own, featuring six singers (SATTBB, in threepart harmony) and the full band. The Beings serve as a sort of Greek chorus, commenting on the action, which, in this case, is a scene between Val and Toots. The song's underpinning is the Infernal Being's motif, an ordered, four-pitch set {5, 6, 3, 0} already heard in the scene change music. Here, it's a moderate 4/4 quarter note ostinato played by pizzicato bass alone before being picked up by the piano in measure five. The vocalists sing their first phrase in a widely spaced A7 chord over the Bb-B natural-Ab-F bass ostinato, "resolving" to Dm while the bass line moves up half a step. This is followed by a short instrumental interlude featuring percussion and winds, introducing a snaking chromatic eigth-note line in the clarinets. The bass line rises another halfstep as the singers reenter; next is another instrumental section, this one tutti and double time. The switch to double time is meant to coincide with the moment onstage when Toots' encounter with Val turns violent; the rest of the song maintains this level of intensity as the bass line continues to rise and the piano and strings play hocketed chord stabs. The song ends with the same material that followed the opening number, "Wow," serving as a death knell for Toots as it did for Shane.

"Tell Me" (Val)

"Tell Me" is a sinister lullaby in a moderate waltz, accompanied by accordion, with a violin cameo at the end. The melody is symmetrical and derived from the chordal sequence. Taking a cue from Danny Elfman, the chords are almost entirely in chromatic third relationships: the first two phrases consist of F, A, and C# (all major chords). The third phrase begins the same way as the first two, but ventures into a new set of chromatic thirds in its consequent half – D major to Bb major – before returning to the familiar A major. The fourth phrase is harmonically the same as the third, except this time, the consequent half is brought to its logical conclusion on Gb major. The second half of the song is then repeated with violin on the melody, giving the song an overall form of AA'BB'BB'.

Swank (Orchestra)

This number underscores another nightclub scene; Jason described the sort of music he had in mind as "uncomfortable lounge music," which inspired this chromatic bossa nova for tenor sax, bass, and egg shaker. Intended purely as source music, Swank serves no particular dramatic function beyond providing a sense of the setting.

The melody, though instrumentally conceived, is largely symmetrical, consisting mostly of four-bar phrases. The harmonies implied by the bass line are constantly shifting and uncertain. In a traditional bossa nova, the bass line would consist of the root and fifth of each chord; here, the bass plays diminished and augmented fifths as often as perfect ones. Nonetheless, the bass line feels somehow logical, with any given pitch acting as a half-step leading tone into the next measure. Repetition also adds coherence to the bass line. The piece is in arch form, with the second B section transposed down a third from the first:

m. 1-8		m. 9-	m. 9-16		m. 17-24			m. 25-32		m. 33-40	
A	В		C	C			B'		A'		
a	a'	b	b'	c	d	ď'	b"	b'''	a	a"	
+4	+4	+4	+4	+3	+2	+3	+4	+4	+4	+4	

Pony Room IV (Orchestra)

As its Roman numeral implies, this is the fourth appearance of the Pony Room music; I chose to discuss this particular instance of it because it's the only time where the piece is heard in its entirety – the other three versions are excerpts. Scored for strings and percussion in a slow 4/4 F# minor, this music is intended to be source music in a bar, and it emulates a pop subgenre from the mid 1990s called trip hop, exemplified by the band Portishead. The style takes rhythmic elements from hip hop and slows them down into a mellow, dark, atmospheric sound.

Like Swank, the Pony Room music is made up almost entirely of four-bar units. The piece begins with a four-bar introduction in which the viola plays an elaboration of the bass line, outlining the three chords that recur throughout the piece: DM7 (usually but not always with a flat 5 and no 3), F#m6, and E7 (often with no 3). The violin enters in the fifth measure with the melody proper – the theme associated with Lyla. This four-bar theme is followed by an eight-bar section where the viola again takes the lead, first elaborating on, then echoing, the bass line. The final section of the piece is a sort of "double chorus," where the violin states Lyla's theme twice more, the second time harmonized by viola, before the bass provides a brief "outro."

"Wait for Me" (Jimmy and Lyla)

This short love duet, in a slow 3/4, is scored for piano and strings. The melody is vocally conceived, mostly stepwise, and low in the singers' ranges to give the effect of an intimate conversation. The song is in D major, although our musical director aptly described it as being "in the key of sus4." The verses consist of a four-bar pattern with eighth note arpeggios anchored by a D pedal tone in the piano's right hand and sustained open octaves in the left, playing a V-IV-I⁶-IV progression.

The upper strings, having played an introductory melody and then dropped out during the first verse, reenter to herald the arrival of the chorus. At this point, the piano's treble and bass functions switch: the eighth note arpeggios move to the left hand, while the right hand plays held chords. The vocalists, having sung alternately on the first verse, come together in harmony for the two-bar chorus. (Their lines are pitch palindromes of each other: Lyla sings G-F-A-E while Jimmy sings E-A-F-G.)

The second verse is similar to the first in that the vocal lines return to alternation and the upper strings again drop out, but this time the bass doubles the piano's left hand. For the third verse, the upper strings reenter and the vocalists sing in harmony, building in intensity and propelling the song into the second and final chorus.

Hell I & II (Orchestra)

"Hell" is the name of another nightclub, this one more underground and illicit than the others, so its music is further afield. Hell I is scored for winds, accordion, bass, and percussion in a slow 4/4 (although the pulse is not obvious for most of the cue.) The winds play long, sustained, staggered notes that combine in a chromatic tone cluster that, over the course of seventeen

measures, gradually rises in pitch by about a fifth. Beginning in measure six, the accordion and bass announce Geraint's entrance with a tone cluster located a tritone away from that of the winds, as ominous thuds are heard on tom-tom. Measure thirteen marks the entrance of Mopsa and Dorcas, as their theme is played by accordion.

Even more so than the underscores for Hott Stuff Productions, the Iguana and Hell I, Hell II blurs the boundary between source music and dramatic underscoring. As the cue begins, the winds pick up their tone cluster where they left off at the end of Hell I, while bass and cowbell reprise the funk beat heard in Hott Stuff. In Hell I, the winds were meant to be heard as source music, but in Hell II, the same material takes on a more explicitly dramatic function, building in intensity as the action on stage does the same. Likewise, the funk beat could be perceived as source music, and it can also be taken as dramatic commentary on two levels: as a reminder to the audience of the connection between this scene and the Hott Stuff scene, and as underscoring to the action itself.

Val's Warehouse & Bedroom (Orchestra)

These two underscoring cues continue the dramatic trajectory of Hell I & II: as Jimmy ventures deeper into the unknown, the music becomes more slippery and less familiar. Unlike the previous pieces, though, these are not source cues, but purely dramatic underscoring, in the spirit of suspenseful film music.

Val's Warehouse is scored for strings, saxophone, and percussion, with the same slow pulse as Hell I. The violin and viola have tremolo whole notes; they begin a minor ninth apart, and the violin line descends as the viola ascends, both by half steps, until they end a minor second apart. Meanwhile, the other instruments add snatches of melody and isolated notes.

The score for Val's Bedroom asks the three string players to play glissandi as slowly as possible, beginning with the lowest fingered note on their highest string, and gradually working their way up to their highest pitch. Because the three instruments are different sizes, the rate of pitch change is different for each, so the intervallic relationships are constantly shifting. The constantly rising pitches and unsettled harmonies add tension and uncertainty to the scene, reflecting Jimmy's fear and anger.

"Going Down" Reprise (Infernal Beings)

This version of "Going Down" accompanies Jimmy's death, as Val and Irene devour him.

The vocal sextet of Infernal Beings is here doubled by the trio of clarinets. Bass and piano again provide the four-note ostinato, which, this time, is transposed downward by half-step every few bars. Percussion fills in the interludes between vocal phrases. The sparse texture and somber tone of this reprise, in which tension is released rather than built up, convey Jimmy's surrender to the forces that have overwhelmed him: he's giving up the ghost.

"Why Am I Still Here?" (Jimmy)

After a blackout, Jimmy wakes up, disoriented and confused. As he tries to figure out what has happened to him, the Infernal Beings swirl around him, showing him all the places he's been over the course of the story.

The song features the full band in a moderate 4/4. It has six verses, with short instrumental sections in-between to cover the set changes. The first verse begins with just piano, droning on a BbM7sus chord as the vocal line vacillates between A and Bb. This musical stasis is meant to convey Jimmy's stunned state of mind. Gradually, as Jimmy's awareness of his situation

heightens, the range of his melody expands, and the clarinets and bass join in and crescendo as the bass line rises in steps.

The song's first scene change (m. 11-15) takes us from Val's bedroom to the lower level of her warehouse. The music borrows material from the show's first scene change, which also originates in Val's bedroom. While the piano's right hand quarter note drone continues on from the first verse, the Infernal Beings motif is cast as a syncopated, staccato bass line in 7/8 (although the written meter remains 4/4), accompanied by constant sixteenth note motion from the percussion. Over this, clarinet and saxophone play the "death knell" melody heard throughout the show.

Lyrically, the beginning of verse two (m. 16-23) echoes that of verse one; their settings are likewise similar. The rhythm of the vocal line is identical, and the underlying harmony is again a kind of drone, although this time the treble notes are arpeggiated eighth notes rather than block chord quarter notes. Meanwhile, soft cymbal hits articulate the pulse. Jimmy continues to gain emotional momentum, as the greater level of rhythmic agitation in this verse attests. Next, as the scene changes from Val's warehouse to Swank, we hear the opening phrase of the Swank melody over an Infernal walking bass line and triplet tom-tom rolls.

In the third verse, Jimmy completes the transition in mood, begun in verse two, from confusion to hopelessness. Scored for strings, the accompaniment recalls the texture of the Pony Room music as Jimmy sings, "I've lost everything I ever cared for." The next set change moves the scene to the Iguana as the piano's left hand plays an aggressive version of the Iguana's clarinet tone cluster riff. The Infernal Being motif appears as a saxophone melody with octave displacement, doubled an octave above by piano.

The energy of the scene change music carries over into the fourth verse, which finds Jimmy having moved from grief to anger: "I can't get back what I've lost, but I can still have – revenge!" Until now, the harmonies during the verses have been within Bb major (or one of its relative modes); this verse is decidedly more chromatic. The tenor sax doubles the vocal line, which is punctuated by tutti chord stabs. The bass notes of the four chords outline the Infernal Being theme, indicating that Jimmy, in his revenge fantasy, is becoming like his enemies.

His anger deflates as the next set change leads to the Pony Room, and his thoughts return to his lost love, Lyla. The scene change is accompanied by the familiar quarter note Infernal bass line, this time with the clarinet and piano playing a melody based on the Pony Room bass line. The fifth verse, too, uses material from the Pony Room music, minus the hip hop syncopation: the mood here is too earnest for the laidback groove of the Pony Room. Both the vocal and violin lines make use of Lyla's theme. Like the first two verses, this one begins with four measures of harmonic stasis, here meant to indicate that Jimmy is lost in the moment, in the memory of Lyla.

The final set change returns Jimmy to his office, where he continues his thought from the previous verse. The chord progression from verse five repeats here, this time with the quarter note piano drone that began the song. As Jimmy asks, "Why did they leave me alive?", Kathy enters to tell him, "They didn't" – and the full band comes in to accompany Jimmy's ascent into heaven (one presumes). The pitches of the drone are transformed into ascending triplet arpeggios and combined with a triumphant melody/bass line, as clarinet and saxophone echo Jimmy's last line. Lest anyone think this is actually a happy ending, Mopsa reappears as the music is cut short, except for the bass, which plays the Infernal Beings motif one last time as Mopsa closes the curtain.

Conclusion

When I first started trying to write this score, I was at a loss. I felt like nothing in my limited bag of tricks would apply to <u>Damned</u>, and I would have to come up with an entirely new compositional vocabulary. As much as I liked the character of Jimmy, I didn't immediately relate to him as I did to Sarah, the protagonist of <u>Whatever Girl</u>. For a long time, I couldn't imagine what Jimmy's musical voice should sound like, and I wondered whether I was the right composer for the show.

There was also the matter of where to begin. Sondheim has claimed that he writes his shows start to finish, almost entirely in order. Given the amount of rewriting that generally seems to occur in musicals before they're mounted, I have to assume this is true only in a very limited sense; nonetheless, I wondered if I ought to try to emulate that approach. I didn't dwell on the idea long, though, because I didn't have a clue what to do with the opening number. Instead, I began with the small bits of scoring that seemed more obvious, such as Swank, and tried to trust that I would figure out the rest sooner or later.

And lo and behold, I did. After multiple aborted attempts at writing "Ow, My Head," I finally found my stride with Jimmy in his second song, "What Is This?" The tone I found for that song, a journey that begins with sarcastic swagger and ends with genuine empathy and vulnerability, seemed to fit his character perfectly. After that, I had the framework and the confidence to write his other songs. And as it turns out, my usual tricks came in handy after all. Working on this project, I did expand my compositional vocabulary: this was, for example, the first time I worked extensively with a motif, using the same four notes in different ways throughout the score. But I also found that my personal style and voice could be put to service in telling a story far outside my own experience – that is, my range as a composer is wider than I'd previously believed.

Having discovered this, I'm eager to find my next project, to stretch myself even further in directions I haven't yet imagined. Of course, <u>Damned</u> still has some growing to do as well: only a full stage production (or perhaps a film version) will reveal all the strengths and weaknesses of the score and script, but I believe it has the potential to be a great show.

Works Cited

Horowitz, Mark Eden. <u>Sondheim on Music: Minor Details and Major Decisions</u>. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2003.

Rona, Jeff. The Reel World: Scoring For Pictures. Milwaukee, WI: Miller Freeman, 2000.

1. WOW







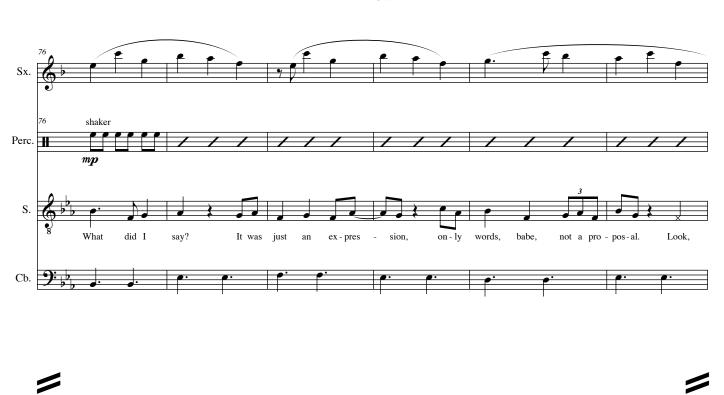






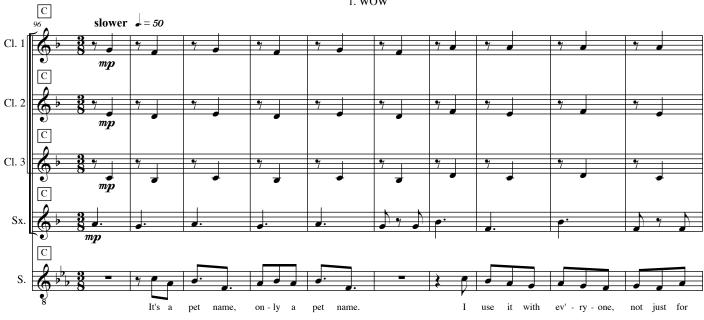






























2. Val's bedroom -> Jimmy's office





3. OW, MY HEAD























4. I WONDER IF HE HEARD ME?



5. Jimmy's office -> Pony Room



6. Pony Room I



7. Pony Room -> payphone



8. payphone -> Jimmy's office

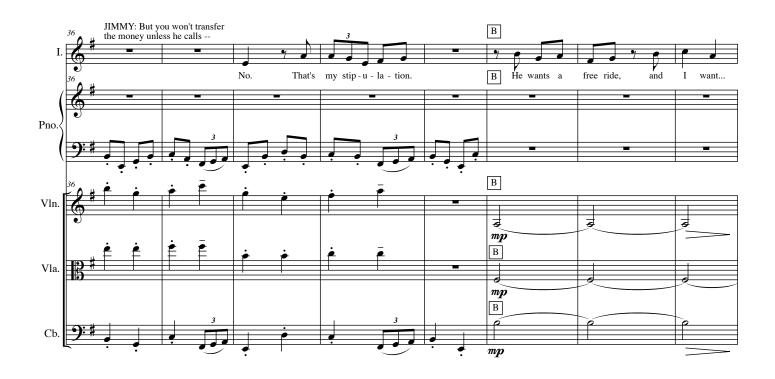


9. PERHAPS I SHOULD EXPLAIN

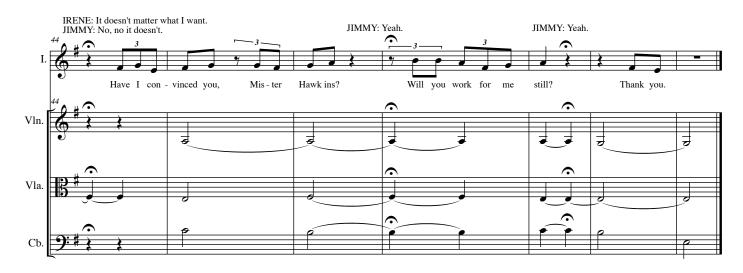


m**f**









10. Jimmy's office -> Hott Stuff Productions



W.G.

11. Hott Stuff Productions





12. Hott Stuff -> Pony Room / montage





13. Pony Room II





14. WHAT IS THIS?

















15. Pony Room III



16. Pony Room -> Jimmy's office



17. I USED TO VOLUNTEER















18. on top of a desk

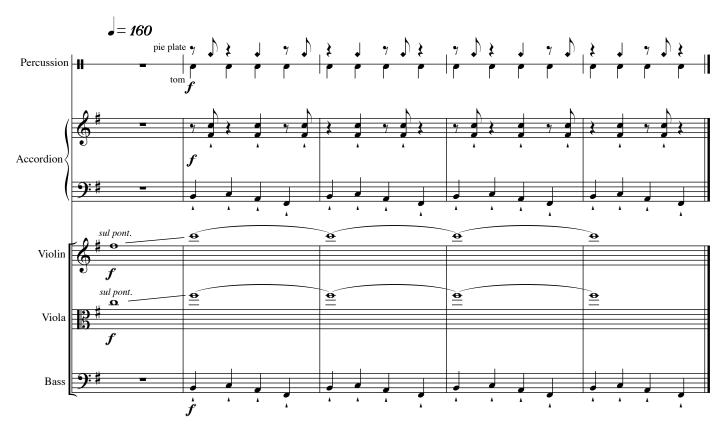




19. Inf B's bring Kathy on



20. InfB's take Kathy off



21. Lyla sings/Jimmy's office -> the Iguana





22. Iguana









23. GOING DOWN















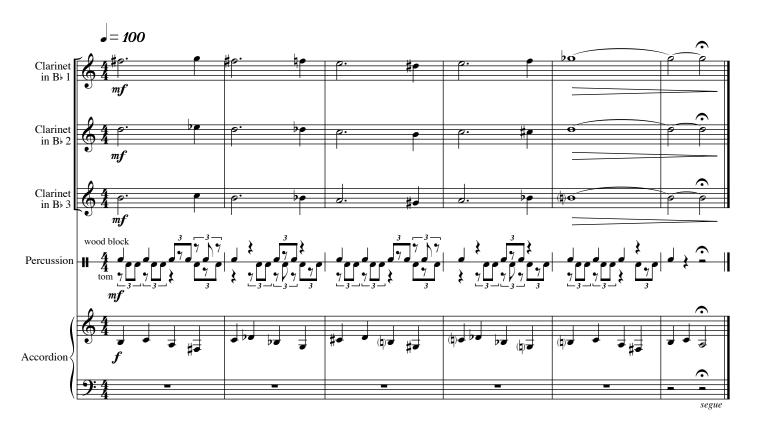


24. Val's device -> tailing the twins -> Jimmy's office



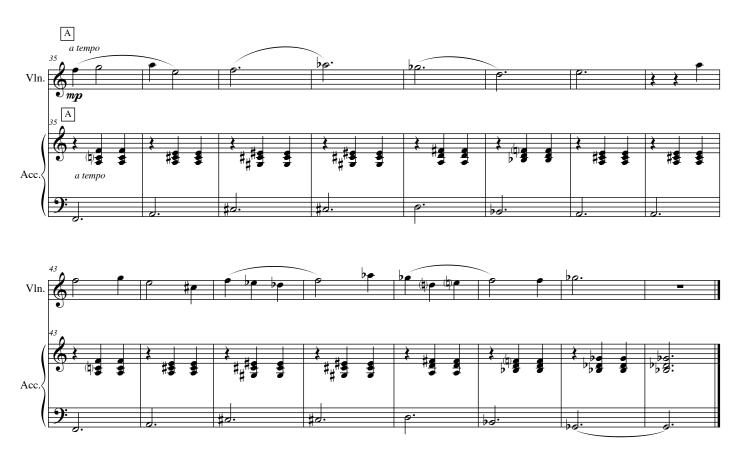


25. Jimmy's office -> Val's bedroom

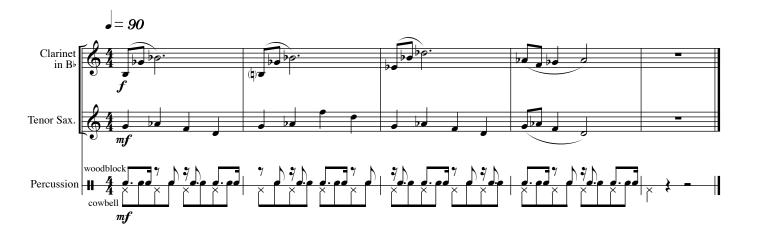


26. TELL ME





27. Val's bedroom -> payphone



28. payphone -> Swank





29. Swank









30. Swank -> tailing Geraint to Hell -> Pony Room

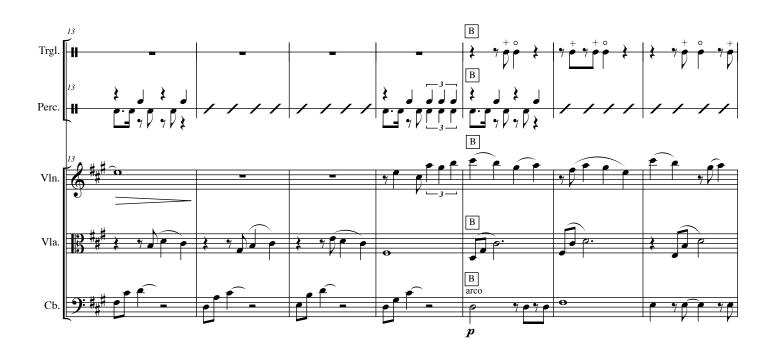






31. Pony Room IV







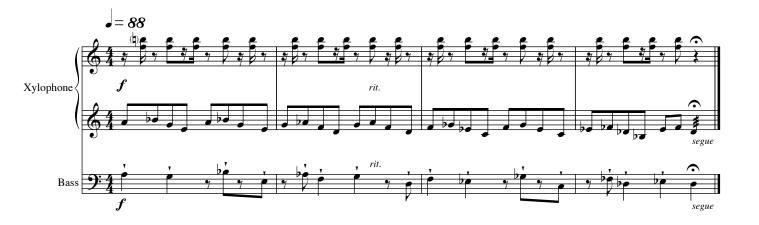
32. WAIT FOR ME





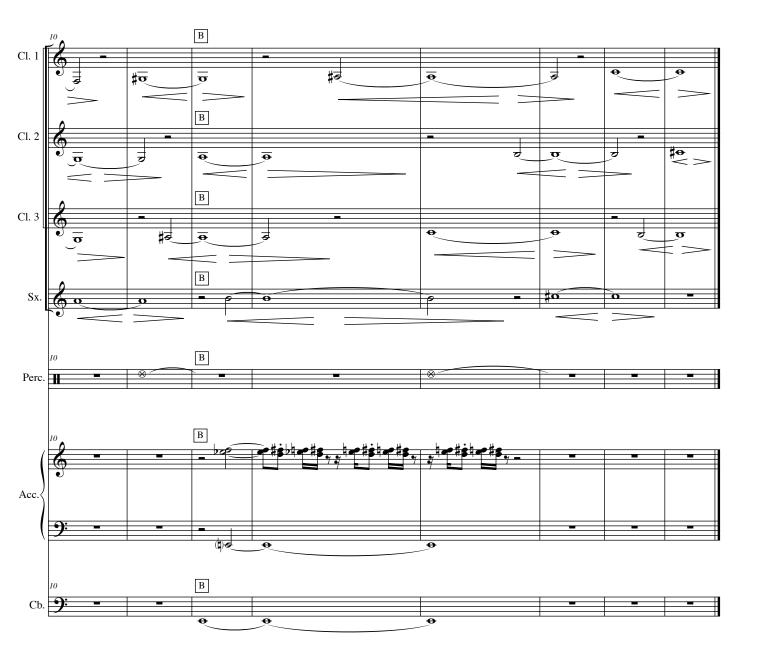


33. Pony Room -> Hell

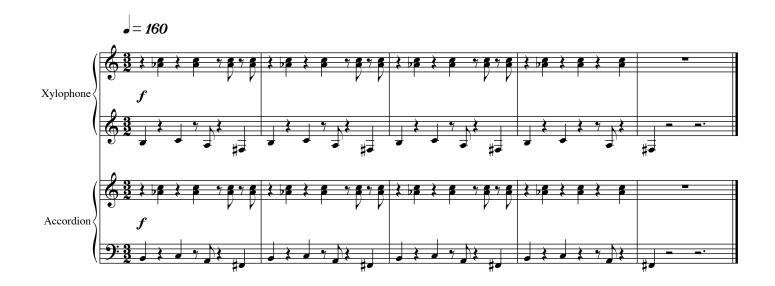


34. Hell I

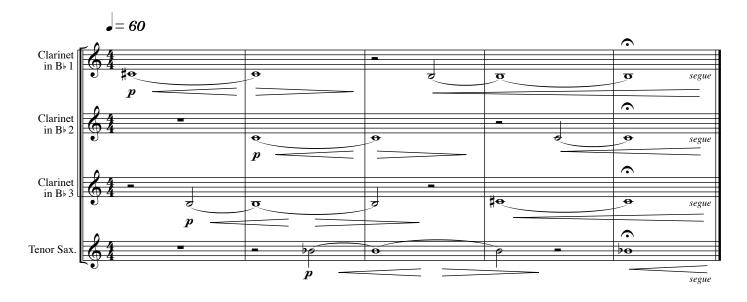




35. Hell -> room 14



36. room 14 of Hell



37. Hell -> Jimmy's office



38. room spin/Jimmy's office -> Hell





39. Hell II





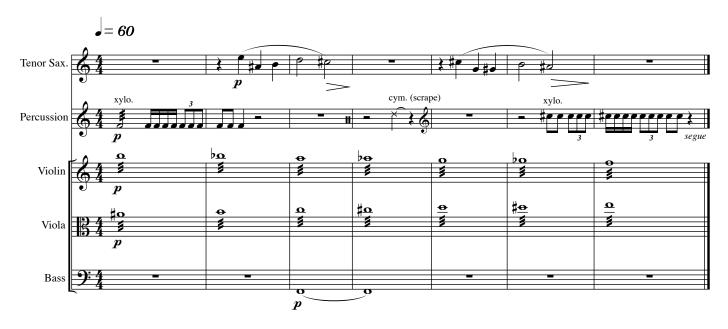
40. Hell -> pushing Mopsa -> Val's warehouse







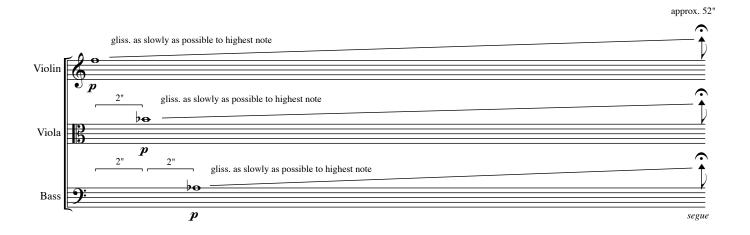
41. Val's warehouse



42. warehouse -> bedroom



43. Val's bedroom



44. GOING DOWN Reprise





45. WHY AM I STILL HERE?























DAMNED

A Musical Noir

Book and Lyrics Music
by by
Jason Ferté Rachel Sakry

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Contact: lost2@easystreet.net

132 SE 12th Ave. Portland, OR 97214

(503) 284-3434

Time: the present.

Setting: various locales, as per scene.

Characters: VAL, a vamp

SHANE, a pornstar

INFERNAL BEINGS, a half-dozen or so nightmarish,

gargoyle-looking creatures

JIMMY HAWKINS, a private detective

IRENE STENSGAARD, Shane's sister

MADS, a bartender

TOOTS, a pre-op transsexual dominatrix

MOPSA and DORCAS, Val's acolytes

MOONSTONE, a pornstar/receptionist

LYLA, a pornstar

KATHY, Jimmy's girlfriend

SUNSHINE, a transvestite dominatrix

GERAINT, a porn director

(A paired cry of sexual release; music under. Val and Shane discovered in bed in Val's warehouse apartment.)

VAL

WOW -

SHANE

WOW -

VAL

WOW -

SHANE

WOW, THAT WAS IN -

VAL SHANE
THAT WAS IN - CREDIBLE -

VAL

CREDIBLE.

SHANE

FAN -

VAL SHANE
THAT WAS - TASTIC -

VAL and SHANE

UNBELIEVABLE.

SHANE

THAT THING YOU DID WITH YOUR -

VAL SHANE

THAT - TONGUE -

VAL

THING YOU DID WITH -

VAL and SHANE

YOUR FINGERS AND TONGUE -

VAL

Jesus, my head almost exploded!

SHANE

Mine fuckin' did -

WOW -

VAL

WOW -

SHANE

WOW, THAT WAS THE -

VAL SHANE

THAT WAS ALRIGHT. BEST I'VE EVER -

SHANE

HAD, THE BEST I'VE EVER -

Hey, whaduya mean alright, I'll show you alright you little vixen -

GOD, YOU'RE AMAZING -

VAL

IS THAT THING GETTING -

VAL SHANE

HARD? I'VE -

SHANE

GOT TO HAVE YOU-

VAL SHANE

IT'S HARD - HAVE YOU -

VAL and SHANE

AGAIN, AND AGAIN -

VAL

I WANT IT INSIDE ME -

VAL SHANE

NOW -AND -

SHANE

MAKE IT LAST FOR -

VAL SHANE

EVER -TONIGHT -

VAL and SHANE

FOR -

VAL SHANE

TONIGHT. EVER.

SHANE

Okay -

FOR TONIGHT.

C'MON, SWING YOUR LEG OVER HERE -

What?

WHAT DID I SAY?

IT WAS ONLY AN EXPRESSION, NOT A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE, NOT AN OVERTURE FOR ANYTHING LONG-TERM.

Look -

WE'RE BOTH HERE FOR THE SAME THING -

VAL

YES -

SHANE

WE BOTH WANT MORE OF THE -

VAL and SHANE

SAME THING -

SHANE

MUCH MORE OF -

VAL and SHANE

THE SAME THING, YES -

VAL

GIVE ME -

VAL and SHANE

MORE OF THE SAME THING,

MORE LIKE THAT, YES -

VAL SHANE

MOVE YOUR KNEE - AND GIVE ME -

VAL and SHANE

MORE!

GOD, YES -

MORE!

I WANT MORE AND MORE AND -

SHANE

THAT'S MY GIRL -

SHANE (continued)

What? You're kidding -

THAT'S -

IT'S A PET NAME,

ONLY A PET NAME.

I USE IT WITH EVERYONE, YOU KNOW I DO,

IT'S NOT JUST FOR YOU -

VAL

Thanks, that helps.

SHANE

Aw, don't be that way -

YOU KNOW WHAT I AM,

YOU KNOW THE THINGS YOU'VE HEARD ARE TRUE.

BUT WHATEVER I AM

I'M HERE WITH YOU.

IT'S NOT FOREVER, IT'S FOR TONIGHT.

YOU'RE NOT MY GIRL -

TURN OUT THE LIGHT.

YOU'RE A HOT FUCK AND LET'S DO IT ONE MORE TIME.

AND MAYBE -

VAL

AND MAYBE -

SHANE

AND MAYBE -

VAL and SHANE

AND MAYBE WE CAN DO IT -

VAL

LIKE -

VAL

SHANE

TWO MORE TIMES? TOMORROW -

SHANE

NIGHT?

Omigod -

WHAT'S WRONG WITH TOMORROW NIGHT?

VAL

Nothing.

SHANE

Hey -

VAL

No, you're right -

I'M SORRY I WAS CROSS,
IT'S MY BAD AND IT DOESN'T MEAN A THING.

Lay back -

C'MON,

LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU, BABY I KNOW WHAT YOU LIKE AND I LIKE WHAT YOU DO AND YOU
KNOW YOU WANT TO DO IT TO ME TOO -

SHANE

Now you're talking -

VAL

Where were we? Oh yes -

YOU WERE FINDING YOUR INNER COWBOY PORNSTAR, AND GETTING THAT THING HARD -

SHANE

Oh yeah, it's gettin' there -

VAL

GET YOUR COCK ROCK-HARD, GET IT HARD, I WANT IT HARD -

MAKE YOUR COCK ROCK-HARD, I NEED IT HARD, A HARD COCK ROCK-HARD, I NEED IT HARD -

There, it's hard -

(She rips out his heart, tosses it aside, sticks her head in the wound and eats. The Infernal Beings enter and cavort across the stage and intermittently pound on the stage floor, they strike Val's warehouse apartment and set Jimmy's office: a desk and chair, another chair, a filing cabinet, a partially-concealed cot, an office door, and Jimmy himself asleep in the desk chair, he tosses and turns. Irene enters, she knocks on Jimmy's door in time with the Infernal Beings' stage floor pounding.)

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins?

(The Infernal Beings exit, music out.)

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins? Mr. Hawkins -

(Jimmy bolts awake)

Mr. Hawkins -

JIMMY

Yeah -

(opens the door)

Uh, sorry -

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins?

JIMMY

Only when they subpoena me. Call me Jimmy, have a seat - (pours himself a drink from a bottle in the filing cabinet)

Drink?

IRENE

It's early in the day for me, thank you. Mr. Hawkins -

JIMMY

Jimmy.

IRENE

I need you to find someone, if you're available that is - (Jimmy spreads his arms wide)

Yes, well -

JIMMY

A hundred a day, plus expenses. Low overhead, that's how come I'm so cheap -

IRENE

Money's not the issue.

JIMMY

I can charge you more -

IRENE

No, you misunderstand me, I... I'm not making myself very clear.

(music under)

JIMMY

Start at the beginning. What's your name?

TRENE

My name is -

JIMMY

OW, MY HEAD,

MY HEAD,

IT FEELS LIKE A LOAD OF BRICKS LANDED ON MY HEAD -

Where's the aspirin?

OKAY, WHO IS SHE?

AND WHAT THE HELL IS SHE GOING ON AND ON ABOUT -

What? Who's she talking about? Whatever -

I NEED A VACATION.

I NEED TO GET THE FUCK OUT THIS OFFICE,
OUT OF THIS TOWN, OUT OF THIS LIFE THAT BURIES ME
UNDER OTHER PEOPLE'S PALLID MYSTERIES,
THEIR BLOATED MISERIES -

It's killing me.

IRENE

What?

JIMMY

Nothing.

I NEED TO GET AWAY FROM HERE I NEED TO ESCAPE,
JUST GO, JUST -

Yeah, like that'll happen -

IRENE

You see he has to call me, daddy put the trust fund in my name, there's more than enough for both of us but he made me the only signatory – $\,$

JIMMY

Uh-huh, right.

I USED TO CARE ABOUT STRANGERS THEY'D STEP THROUGH MY DOOR
AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT THEIR LIVES, THEIR LOVES,
THEIR HOPES AND FEARS
AND ASK ME, BEG ME, PAY ME
TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE DANGER.

Some fuckin' hero-for-hire -

TRENE

It's been over a month now, and he never goes this long without contacting me. Maybe I'm being overly protective but he's still my little brother, my only family -

JIMMY

Sure.

I'VE DONE EVERYTHING FOR THESE PEOPLE,
EVERYTHING THEY'VE ASKED FOR AND MORE I'VE GIVEN ALL OF MYSELF,
I'VE BEEN STABBED AND SHOT AND CLUBBED AND
STEPPED ON,
RUN OVER,
BEAT DOWN INTO THE GUTTER,
AND THEY JUST KEEP ON COMING -

I'm not making a difference, none at all.

IRENE

This is the address -

(hands him a business card)
I've been there once but it's not my clientele, I didn't do
any more than run in and run out, I'm afraid -

JIMMY

More my kinda joint, huh? Touché.

IRENE

I didn't mean -

JIMMY

Forget it. This the best place to find him?

IRENE

Yes. I'm sorry if I've offended -

JIMMY

ONCE MORE,

ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH -

AND WHY NOT?

IT'S WHAT I'M GOOD FOR,

WHY SHOULD THE ENGLISH DEAD HAVE ALL THE FUN?

STOP THINKING -

STOP THINKING OF THE WAR,

FOCUS ON THE BATTLE.

WHY THE HELL SHOULDN'T WHAT'S-HER-NAME HERE GET -

Whatever it is, I dunno -

IRENE

Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. You can reach me at the number on the back $\ -$

JIMMY

Jimmy. And I'll need a retainer -

IRENE

Is five hundred enough?

(she gives him an envelope)

There's also a picture of him -

JIMMY

Fine. Thanks, er -

IRENE

MY NAME IS IRENE STENSGAARD, AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. PLEASE FIND MY BROTHER SHANE FOR ME, MR. HAWKINS -

He's all I've got -

JIMMY

I'll find him.

(Irene exits.)

JIMMY

What a lousy fuckin' heel -

HERE'S TO ANOTHER WILD GOOSE CHASE, AND HERE'S TO MY FUCKING EXISTENCE. IF IT WEREN'T FOR PEOPLE GETTING THEMSELVES LOST AND OTHER PEOPLE WANTING ME TO FIND THEM, AND PAYING ME DECENT MONEY -

I'd have to get a job.

(Jimmy exits; Irene enters.)

IRENE

I WONDER IF HE HEARD ME?

I WONDER IF I SAID TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH -

I DON'T THINK HE WAS LISTENING VERY WELL,

I HOPE MY TRUST ISN'T MISPLACED.

I HOPE THIS MAN IS MORE THAN HE SEEMS - WELL, AT LEAST WHAT HE SEEMS, BECAUSE HE DOES SEEM THE MAN FOR THE JOB,

THE MAN FOR -

I HOPE HE CALLS ME SOON -

(Irene exits. The Infernal Beings enter and strike Jimmy's office and set the Pony Room: a long bar, a sign that reads "Pony Room," tables and chairs, Mads behind the bar, Toots hunched over a drink, Mopsa and Dorcas seated at one of the tables. Jimmy enters, the Infernal Beings exit. Mopsa and Dorcas exit past Jimmy as he enters the Pony Room.)

JIMMY

(to Mads)

Hey -

(shows him the photo of Shane)

You seen this guy around?

MADS

Doesn't ring any bells.

TOOTS

Lemme see... whozit lookin' for him?

JIMMY

His sister.

TOOTS

He don't have any sister -

(Toots punches Jimmy in the face, slugs him in the gut, punches him in the face again and tosses him out of the Pony Room.)

MADS

'Nother round?

TOOTS

Nah, I'm good.

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike the Pony Room and set a payphone. Jimmy crawls over to it and dials, Irene enters with a cell phone. The Infernal Beings exit, music out.)

IRENE

Hello?

JIMMY

You know, I've walked into less obvious set-ups, but I gotta admit this one was damn effective, right to the point, no fuckin' around -

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins-?

Was the divorce settlement from... I dunno, whoever, not puttin' enough walkin' around money in your purse? Cuz you looked pretty goddamn well-heeled to me -

IRENE

What, what are you talking about, did something happen -

JIMMY

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins?

JIMMY

And call me Jimmy, damnit -

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins? Mr. Hawkins?

(Irene exits.)

JIMMY

Motherfucker -

(Jimmy passes out; music under. The Infernal Beings enter and strike the payphone and set Jimmy's office, they drop Jimmy in his chair with a bag of ice on his head. Irene enters and knocks on Jimmy'S door.)

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins?

(The Infernal Beings exit, music out.)

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins, are you there-?

JIMMY

Go away -

IRENE

Mr. Hawkins, I need to speak with you... please, Mr. Hawkins -

(Jimmy opens the door)

JIMMY

Get your money's worth yet?

IRENE

What? Yes, I mean no... what happened to you?

JIMMY

I met that friend of yours. You know, big guy, wears a dress, punches like he's got anvils instead of fists -

IRENE

Friend of mine? No, no I didn't... I'm not responsible for this, I mean I am because I hired you but -

JIMMY

So you're not the ex-wife of one of my clients, I took some pictures of you fuckin' around with somebody else, your husband ditches you and now you're tryin' to blame me and get back at me for it?

IRENE

I've never been married, Mr. Hawkins.

JIMMY

Sorry, my mistake.

IRENE

Please believe me, I didn't send you to that place to have you beat up -

JIMMY

Well somebody doesn't have their story straight. The guy who did this, he said Shane doesn't have a sister -

IRENE

Oh.

(music under)

JIMMY

Yeah, oh -

IRENE

PERHAPS I SHOULD EXPLAIN A LITTLE MORE. SHANE IS AS EMBARRASSED OF ME AS I SOMETIMES AM OF HIM, HE WOULDN'T TELL HIS FRIENDS ABOUT ME, MUCH LESS -

He just wouldn't.

JIMMY

I thought you said you see him like, every few weeks -

IRENE

HE CALLS ME FOR THE MONEY, I CAN HAVE IT TRANSFERRED DIRECTLY TO HIS ACCOUNT BUT ONLY SO MUCH AT A TIME.

IRENE (continued)

That's another of daddy's stipulations.

SHANE CALLS ME, I TRANSFER THE MONEY, HE SPENDS IT. WE NEVER SEE EACH OTHER ${\mathord{\text{--}}}$

JIMMY

But you won't transfer the money unless he calls -

IRENE

NO. THAT'S MY STIPULATION. HE WANTS A FREE RIDE, AND I WANT -

It doesn't matter what I want.

JIMMY

No, no it doesn't.

IRENE

HAVE I CONVINCED YOU, MR. HAWKINS?

JIMMY

Yeah.

IRENE

WILL YOU WORK FOR ME STILL? (hands him a thick envelope)

JIMMY

Yeah -

IRENE

THANK YOU.

JIMMY

What's your brother do?

IRENE

He stars in porn films, Mr. Hawkins. He has a twelve-inch cock .

(Irene exits. The Infernal Beings enter and strike Jimmy's office and set the Hot Stuff Productions office: a big desk and chair, Moonstone at the desk reading a magazine; the Infernal Beings exit. Jimmy enters.)

MOONSTONE

Can I help you?

JIMMY

Hey, yeah, I'm looking for Shane Stensgaard -

MOONSTONE

I'm sorry, sir, we don't give out personal info about the talent -

JIMMY

No, I'm looking for a client -

MOONSTONE

All such requests need to be in writing and addressed to our... wait, a client?

JIMMY

Yes, I'm looking for him on behalf of his family, he seems to have disappeared -

MOONSTONE

Are you a detective?

JIMMY

Yes, I -

MOONSTONE

I've never met a real live detective before -

JIMMY

Huh.

(Lyla appears at a vanity to one side of the office wearing a bra, garters and stockings; she wraps her hair up in a towel, puts on a pair of stiletto heels and slips into a floor-length bathrobe.)

MOONSTONE

Attorneys, cops, bookies, loan sharks... this guy at the club down the block, beats you up and tosses you out on your keister? I know him -

JIMMY

That's -

MOONSTONE

But I've never met a... gumshoe.

JIMMY

What's your name?

MOONSTONE

Moonstone. Cynthia Jones-Pitarsky really, but I changed it for the business. Perhaps you've seen me in something? I'm featured in many of Mr. Geraint's biggest sellers -

Uh, no -

MOONSTONE

Also I have office skills so he pays me to mind the place -

(Lyla enters the office, she glances at Jimmy and crosses through as Geraint appears and leads her off.)

MOONSTONE

So you're looking for Shane? Who'd he kill?

JIMMY

I'm not sure -

MOONSTONE

Cuz with a schlong like his, I wouldn't be surprised. I did this one scene with him once, we were in this hot tub out in the woods 'n all... boy I'll tell you, never again, I was sore for a week -

JIMMY

I'm just trying to find him, for his family.

MOONSTONE

Oh. Well I don't really know him. She might -

JIMMY

Who just-?

MOONSTONE

Lyla. I mean she should know him, they've done enough movies together... Mr. Geraint keeps teaming them up, says they got chemistry or something. Whatever.

JIMMY

Well thanks -

MOONSTONE

Hey! You want some of his movies? Shane's movies?

JIMMY

Sure -

MOONSTONE

We keep copies of some of the better titles around for the distributors... I'm in this one – $\,$

JIMMY

Uh -

MOONSTONE

And, here. Here's a bunch with him and Lyla, bestsellers -

JIMMY

You keep plugging away at it -

MOONSTONE

Oh I will, don't you worry about that. I won't be second banana forever, buddy, just you wait and see -

(Jimmy exits the office.)

MOONSTONE

Bye-!

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike the Hot Stuff Productions office and set the Pony Room: Mads behind the bar. Jimmy remains onstage and watches a porn montage featuring Shane and Lyla projected above, the montage ends with glamour-style head shots and high school yearbook photos of Lyla, Jimmy takes notes. The Infernal Beings exit. The montage ends and Lyla enters past Jimmy into the Pony Room, he follows her.)

JIMMY

Miss Buttersfield?

LYLA

Yes? What is it?

JIMMY

I need your help, Miss Buttersfield. I'm -

LYLA

That's not my name anymore, it's Lyla -

JIMMY

I'm looking for a friend of yours, Shane Stensg -

LYLA

He's not my friend.

JIMMY

Uh, sorry. I thought -

LYLA

We worked together, that's all. You're looking for him, is he missing?

Yeah, his sister seems to think so -

LYLA

He doesn't have a sister.

JIMMY

Ah -

LYLA

What?

JIMMY

Nothing. I've heard that before -

LYLA

He's an only child, at least that's what he's said the few times he's mentioned his family -

JIMMY

I thought you two weren't friends?

LYLA

We're not. He likes to listen to himself talk, some men do that, a lot. Look, I'm afraid I can't help you, mister-?

JIMMY

Hawkins, Jimmy -

LYLA

I don't know him, and I don't know where he is.

JIMMY

Sure. Can I buy you a drink?

LYLA

I don't think so, Mr. Hawkins. Goodbye -

JIMMY

WHAT IS THIS,

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

IMPOSSIBLE,

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE -

I KNOW WHAT LUST IS,

I'VE SEEN TITS AND ASS OF EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE, EVERY CONCEIVABLE SHAPE AND SIZE -

AND I'VE PHOTOGRAPHED THEM ALL IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE

POSITION DOING EVERYTHING IMAGINABLE, AND A FEW THINGS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE BUT TRUE.

I KNOW WHAT LUST IS -

JIMMY (continued)

This is nothing -

I KNOW WHAT HEARTACHE IS,
I SHOW THE PHOTOS I TAKE TO THE PEOPLE WHO PAY ME TO
TAKE THEM,

TO THE HUSBANDS AND WIVES,

JILTED LOVERS HURT TOO DEEP FOR WORDS.

BUT I SEE IT IN THEIR EYES, AND I FEEL IT TOO.

I KNOW WHAT HEARTACHE IS -

And I've had my fill of it, all of it.

I'VE LEARNED ABOUT GUILT -

The way people toss aside the best thing that's ever happened to them in a moment of blind panic, and then regret it for the rest of their lives – $\,$

AND I'VE LEARNED ABOUT HATE.

And how other people make a different choice, they do nothing and let that oozing, puss-filled wound in their heart grow and fester and shade everything they feel and do until their entire world becomes a stinking, stagnant cesspool of -

HOW CAN THIS BE?
HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING TO ME?
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE,
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE -

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

IT'S THE FACE OF AN ANGEL, A VOICE SOFTER THAN LIGHT, AND A TOUCH LIKE VELVET, LIGHTER THAN VELVET, BUT HEAVY AS A BLOW TO THE HEART -

AND IT'S HAPPENING TO ME, I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

I LOOK IN HER EYES, AND ALL THAT I SEE - I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

Nothing else matters -

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

(to Lyla)

Uh -

LYLA

I told you I can't help you -

Thing is, you're my only lead, anything you know may be helpful.

LYLA

And what if I want to be difficult?

JIMMY

I'm not looking to harass you -

LYLA

That's exactly what you're doing, Mr. Hawkins. You've asked and I've answered -

JIMMY

No, you haven't. You said Shane likes to talk, tell me what he's said to you, about life, sex, does he have a pet name for his penis, whatever. There's gonna be something there I can use, that's how this works -

LYLA

What if I like him lost?

(Toots enters and bumps into Jimmy.)

JIMMY

Hey-!

TOOTS

Oh I'm sorry -

JIMMY

It's okay, no harm no foul -

TOOTS

Do I know you?

JIMMY

We've met -

LYLA

He's been asking about Shane -

TOOTS

Right.

(Toots punches Jimmy in the face, slugs him in the gut, punches him in the face again.)

LYLA

Toots, wait-!

Some guys just can't take a hint -

(Toots tosses Jimmy out of the Pony Room.)

TOOTS

(to Lyla)

Hey sugar, how you been?

MADS

The usual?

TOOTS

Make it two. And pour another one for little Miss Lyla here, looks like she need it -

LYLA

Toots, I was handling it -

TOOTS

Oh pshaw. I'm a growing boy, you know I need my exercise. (to Mads)

That is good.

(to Lyla)

Now come on baby, tell me all about this... whatever it is before I get too potted to remember my name, or yours, or his. What is his name anyway, with all the two-fisted excitement around here I forgot to ask -

JIMMY

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS -

(Jimmy passes out. The Infernal Beings enter and strike the Pony Room and set Jimmy's office, they drop Jimmy in his chair, he tosses and turns. Kathy enters.)

KATHY

I used to volunteer at this little theatre, they'd have me help them with little things, like -

I'D SIT BACKSTAGE DURING THE SHOW, AND WHEN THE PHONE WAS SUPPOSED TO RING, I'D RING IT.

How they did this, they'd cue me with a little light, a little blue light, when it came on I knew my cue was coming up and when it went out that'd be my cue to ring the phone.

I LIKED THAT LITTLE THEATRE, I FELT LIKE I WAS PART OF SOMETHING DURING THE SHOW, BUT I NEVER WENT OUT WITH THE ACTORS AFTERWARDS, THEY NEVER ASKED ME TO, SO I'D JUST GO HOME.

KATHY (continued)

One night the little light never came on, I knew the show real well 'cause i'd been doing it for weeks, so when it was supposed to ring ${\mathord{\text{--}}}$

I RANG THE PHONE ANYWAY.

After the show, no one came to thank me, no one said: oops I forgot to cue you, thanks for saving my ass.

THEY ALL WENT OUT, WITHOUT ME, AND I WENT HOME.

THEN I MET JIMMY -

(The Infernal Beings grab Kathy and rip her head off and carry her offstage. Lyla enters and knocks on Jimmy's door, Jimmy bolts awake, music out. Lyla knocks again)

JIMMY

Yeah yeah, keep your shirt on (pours a drink and opens the door)

LYLA

Hello.

JIMMY

Whadda you want?

LYLA

I came to apologize -

JIMMY

Yeah? That's nice -

LYLA

Look, Mr. Hawkins... Jimmy, I didn't mean for that to happen, it just -

JIMMY

That's so funny, nobody means for me to get the shit beat outta me, but it keeps on coming -

(TOOTS enters.)

JIMMY

I don't believe this -

LYLA

Let me explain -

What the fuck is he doing here?

LYLA

Please -

TOOTS

It's she -

LYLA

If I could just -

JIMMY

What?

TOOTS

The proper pronoun to use is she.

JIMMY

Oh. Sorry.

TOOTS

That's alright. My name is Toots, and I really should be the one saying I'm sorry to you. I'm sorry.

(shake hands with Jimmy)

Well good. That went okay -

JIMMY

You do that a lot? Plant guys on their ears?

TOOTS

It happens, but usually only when I'm drinking. Speaking of which $\ -$

(Jimmy hands her the drink he hasn't been drinking.)

TOOTS

You wouldn't have any ice? No? Well, any port... or rotgut Scotch in a storm, as they say -

(Jimmy motions with the bottle to Lyla, she shakes her head.)

JIMMY

This is a swell little party and all, but -

LYLA

I wanted to explain things to you, I owe you that much -

JIMMY

Yeah, I'm sure I got a couple of Band-Aids around here -

Poor baby. Sorry, it's the booze -

LYLA

Please, let me say this. You asked about Shane... he's a fucking bastard, he's, he's -

TOOTS

Oh spit it out, honey. The man's a used cock salesman — sorry, used car salesman, thinks he's got a Ferrari but it's just a Buick, all grill and no thrill. He fucks like he's pounding a steak and pillow-talks like Ernest Borgnine. He lives on coke and blabs more than a Republican at a Senate investigating committee. Nobody likes him in the biz but with that damn Buick he's got, it'd be ridiculous not to use him. Everybody knows everything about him, and who gives a fuck? This is really bad Scotch, may I-?

(Jimmy shrugs, Toots helps herself) You're a prince, you know that?

JIMMY

His sister gives a fuck, apparently - I know, he doesn't have a sister.

TOOTS

You sure she doesn't want him murdered?

JIMMY

I'm not sure of anything at this point except this knot on $\mbox{\it my}$ head -

TOOTS

My bad.

JIMMY

So when you said you didn't want him found -

LYLA

If I never had to work with him again, it wouldn't break my heart.

JIMMY

What would?

TOOTS

My, where's that breeze when you need it -

JIMMY

Anybody else feel this way about Shane?

Try everybody who's ever met him. Gettin' the picture, shamus?

JIMMY

Yeah, in technicolor. The thing is still, where can I find him?

LYLA

Even if he's not worth finding?

JIMMY

I took the lady's money, it's the least I can do.

TOOTS

Well I for one commend your dogged determination, if not your taste in liquor -

(grabs the bottle)

JIMMY

Easy on that. If you've got any suggestions on where I can look now we've got the exposition over with -

LYLA

You could take him to the Iguana -

TOOTS

No way sugar, you know how they feel about tourists there, and it's not like he could blend -

JIMMY

What's that, a tiki bar or something-?

TOOTS

Oh hardly. It's part of life in the big city that you just don't need to know about -

(to Lyla)

Baby, you sure? Well, it's not like it's gonna scar him anymore than he already is... sorry, poor choice of metaphor. On the plus side, I can still use a metaphor in a sentence. Yay me.

LYLA

(to Jimmy)

The Iguana is a hangout of Shane's -

TOOTS

Honey, with the lizard he's packing, he's a card-carrying member... ooh, score another one. I'll shut up now -

I,YI,A

Toots can take you there later.

And I can leave now. Come find me at the Pony Room, I'll be the pretty one -

(Toots exits.)

LYLA

I've been thinking of something I said to you, at the Pony Room -

JIMMY

Goodbye?

LYLA

(kisses him)

Hurt much?

(kisses him again)

JIMMY

Yeah, right here in the office... been there done that, huh?

LYLA

I've fucked in an office, sure -

JIMMY

I bet.

LYLA

I've fucked in a theatre lobby, I've fucked in a warehouse full of frozen chickens. I've fucked in an airplane, in first class, coach, and in the baggage compartment -

JIMMY

They really have free drinks in first class-?

LYLA

I've fucked in a museum, I've fucked in a crypt, I've fucked in a bathtub, in a Jacuzzi, in a swimming pool, and in the fucking Pacific Ocean. I've fucked in Amsterdam, Hamburg, Barcelona, and the goddamn fucking Sahara Desert. I've fucked in a jeep, on a moped and even once with a parachute strapped to my ass. I've fucked my brains out, you are absolutely, one-hundred-percent correct. And if you want, if you really want to, we can fuck right here, in your office, right now. But one thing I've never done, I've never made love on top of a fucking desk -

(Jimmy shoves everything off the desk; music under. Jimmy hoists Lyla onto the desk, he climbs on top of her, they fumble their clothes off and make love. The Infernal Beings enter and spin Jimmy's office and reset it; the Infernal Beings exit, music out.)

LYLA

You gotta cigarette? No? S'okay. Mmm, that made me feel young again, like a girl, not a little girl but... like when you've been asked out on a date and you can't believe it, an honest to Pete date, and you don't know what to wear and you're all excited, waiting for the boy to pick you up in his daddy's car and you know, you just know it's gonna be a special night -

(Jimmy climbs off the desk and gets dressed.)

LYLA

What, what is it-?

JIMMY

Nothing... I just need to, uh -

LYLA

Don't you dare -

JIMMY

You know, look, I'll be back in a bit and we -

LYLA

Don't you run from me... Jimmy -

JIMMY

A long time ago I was gonna get married. Kathy -

(The Infernal Beings enter with Kathy, her head hangs down to her chest.)

JIMMY

I was just a kid, washing dishes at this café. Kathy bussed tables, she wanted to be an actress. Most nights we closed together, we'd talk, about everything and nothing. Safe. And this punk comes in for a cup of coffee, real bad-boy type and she fell for him, just like that. She's having it rough with him and telling me about it, shit this asshole's pulling, cheating on her. Like, she wanted him in the sack but she wanted me to, I dunno, be there. One night she couldn't take it, crying so hard, and she's in my arms, sobbing, sweaty, her hair smelling like... and that was it. We decide we're gonna run away together, just go, drive all night to Vegas, pick a chapel, say the words.

JIMMY (continued)

A new life. I go get my car and asshole shows up. I dunno what happened, if she told him or he was drunk or . . . I pull into the lot and he's throwing her across the seat of his car, he gets in and takes off. I'm right behind him, chasing him, riding my horn, swerving -

LYLA

Jimmy-

JIMMY

He's driving so fast, out of control, and I'm going crazy trying to run him off the road. I can see her beside him, there's another car coming and the headlights... she grabbed the wheel. I didn't see it, didn't see what happened I spun out, went into a ditch. It was head-on, the windshield shattered and -

(Kathy lifts her head, her neck is sliced completely open; the Infernal Beings carry her off.)

JIMMY

Everybody died, except me. I don't expect you to be here, I don't expect you to do this. If you're gonna be with me, that's the deal.

LYLA

I'm with you, Jimmy.

(Jimmy kisses her, he exits; music under.)

LYLA

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS -

(Lyla curls up on the desktop. The Infernal Beings enter and strike Jimmy's office and set the Iguana: a big "iguana" sign, steps down to various-sized pedestals. The Infernal Beings remove parts of their costumes and become Iguana employees and patrons and vogue on the pedestals; Toots and Jimmy enter above.)

TOOTS

Okay, this is it, here -

(Toots removes her dress and wig revealing a dominatrix costume underneath, she changes shoes.)

TOOTS

Ahh, that's better.

Suits you.

TOOTS

Don't I know it, it's like my fuckin' second skin -

JIMMY

Then what's up with the sun dresses?

TOOTS

I'm complex. And here's a little something for you, I picked out an extra-large, I hope it fits -

(Toots fastens a leather collar around Jimmy's neck and attaches a leash to it.)

TOOTS

Perfect.

JIMMY

This is it? This is the big disguise?

TOOTS

Sugar, with all the business this joint gets from Red-State types, trust me, you'll pass. Barely. Carry my bag -

JIMMY

Yes, mistress -

TOOTS

See, you got it.

JIMMY

You can't tell anyone about this... I mean it -

TOOTS

I dunno, after our first two tête-à-têtes... oh alright then. Come on, Fido -

(Toots and Jimmy go down the steps, the Infernal Doorman nods and they enter the Iquana.)

TOOTS

We'll just take a quick swing-through, see if our little gunslinger is out and around. And honey, try not to gawk at the grown-ups -

JIMMY

Yeah, right -

(Toots and Jimmy come to the first pedestal: an Infernal Woman urinates in an Infernal Man's face, he laps it up.)

JIMMY

Jesus -

TOOTS

Pick your jaw up off the floor, tough guy, hmm? Come on, hop hop -

(Sunshine enters.)

TOOTS

Hey Sunshine, how's tricks?

SUNSHINE

Shitty. Like fuckin' Siegfried without Roy.

TOOTS

Aww, too bad sugar, I'd share mine but we're on a Grail quest. Speaking of, is Shane in the house tonight?

SUNSHINE

That asshole? I haven't seen him, the fuck. What do you want with that cunting piece of shit on a stick anyway?

TOOTS

Oh you know, Fido here wants a boner, claims he has an allergic reaction to all things rubber.

SUNSHINE

Get him a donkey -

TOOTS

Can't, love. He's a vegan.

SUNSHINE

His loss. See you later, masturbator -

(Sunshine exits.)

TOOTS

Ciao. Don't fall off anything I wouldn't sit on... see you
in Denmark... bitch. Oh well -

(Mopsa and Dorcas enter.)

JIMMY

I know those two -

(grabs Dorcas)

Hey, excuse me, but -

(Dorcas slaps him and sends him sprawling.)

DORCAS

(to Toots)

Watch your mutt -

TOOTS

Sorry, he's from Duluth -

(Mopsa and Dorcas exit.)

TOOTS

What are you doing? Some big detective, can't even handle a little undercover work -

JIMMY

I've seen those two, at the Pony Room -

TOOTS

Really? There's not a lot of cross-pollination hither and yon, I thought I was the only bee working both sides of that hill. Oh, and Shane of course, but he's so obvious -

JIMMY

Toots -

TOOTS

What?

JIMMY

Skip it.

(takes off the collar)

TOOTS

Hey, what're you -

JIMMY

Don't wait up -

TOOTS

Wait, you're gonna follow them? That's kinky, and good for you, but why?

JIMMY

I got a hunch. It's how I pay my bills -

(Jimmy exits.)

TOOTS

Break a leg, just hope it's not yours.

(Val enters.)

TOOTS

Well, hello dessert -

VAL

Mmmm, wanna lick?

TOOTS

I usually go in for the snakes, and the snails, and the puppy dog tails. But you're a little candy cane now, aren't you baby? What flavor are you?

VAL

Cinnamon.

TOOTS

Oh oh, I'm a sucker for cinnamon. You lead, I'll follow -

(Val and Toots exit.)

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN GOING BELOW -

(The Infernal Beings strike the Iguana and set Val's device: a large rack in the shape of an "X".)

INFERNAL BEINGS

(Val and Toots enter, they embrace.)

GOING DOWN, DOWN GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

TOOTS

Mmmm, baby -

(Val smiles and snaps Toots's spine, Toots collapses and the Infernal Beings strap her to the device.)

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN GOING BELOW -

(Val bites into Toots's throat and rips off a strip of flesh, Toots screams.)

TOOTS

Oh God, oh Jesus -

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN
GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

(Val tears away Toots's thong and grabs her genitalia.)

TOOTS

Oh Jesus, please -

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN

GOING BELOW,

GOING DOWN -

(Val rips Toots's genitalia from her body, Toots bellows.)

TOOTS

Ah, fucking Jesus! Ah God... thank you -

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN
GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

TOOTS

Do you validate?

(Val bites into Toots's genitalia. The Infernal Beings activate the device, it expands and tears Toots limb from limb. The Infernal Beings strike Val's device and exit. Mopsa and Dorcas enter and cross the stage, Jimmy enters and follows them off; Mopsa and Dorcas double back and exit. The Infernal Beings enter and set Jimmy's office: Lyla asleep on the desk. The Infernal Beings exit, music out. Jimmy enters, he touches Lyla and she wakes.)

JIMMY

Неу -

LYLA

What time is it?

JIMMY

Late. You didn't have to stay here -

LYLA

I wanted you to see I was with you. Where's Toots?

At the tiki bar, she seemed to be in her element. I followed a lead to a dead end, score another bull's eye for me ${\mathord{\text{--}}}$

LYLA

I might be able to help, but I should go now -

JIMMY

Lyla. Can I see you again?

LYLA

When.

JIMMY

Uh, I dunno, I should get some sleep, maybe later -

LYLA

No. I mean, you say when, I'll be here. I'm here now -

JIMMY

When.

(Jimmy kisses her; music under. The Infernal Beings enter and pick them up and carry them off and strike Jimmy's office and set Val's bed: Val in bed with Toots's head. The Infernal Beings exit.)

VAL

TELL ME,

TELL ME,

TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME -

SHOW ME,

SHOW ME,

SHOW ME THAT YOU CARE FOR ME -

BE MINE,

BE MINE,

BE MINE FOR ALL TIME -

AND I'LL BE YOURS FOREVER MORE.

(Mopsa and Dorcas enter and disrobe.)

VAL

Ahh -

(tosses Toots's head to Mopsa)
And no more like this one, he tasted funny -

(Mopsa and Dorcas climb into bed with Val.)

VAL

Hurry hurry, gimme gimme -

(Dorcas produces a knife and cuts her arm, Val licks up her blood. The Infernal Beings enter and strike Val's bed and set the payphone; Jimmy enters and dials, Irene enters with her cell phone. The Infernal Beings exit, music out.)

TRENE

Hello?

JIMMY

Miss Stensgaard, it's Jimmy Hawkins -

IRENE

Yes, Mr. Hawkins -

JIMMY

I'm not having any luck finding your brother, I want to tell you that right off the bat -

IRENE

Yes -

JIMMY

I'm starting to think, a guy like Shane, he's not the type to get lost on purpose if you know what I mean, he likes being the center of things too much -

IRENE

I see -

JIMMY

Enough time has passed now, you could file a missing person's report – $\,$

IRENE

No! No, I mean, please. No police, please... if you can help it – $\,$

JIMMY

The money you're paying me, I can help it plenty. Look, I've made some contacts, got some names, people he's worked for. I'll keep asking, but the longer this goes -

IRENE

I understand, Mr. Hawkins. Thank you, for everything.
You'll call me -

Yeah, I'll call you -

(Jimmy hangs up, Irene exits. Music under, the Infernal Beings enter and strike the payphone and set Swank: spot-lit columns and multiple levels, low chaises and elbow perches. The Infernal Beings remove more pieces of their costumes and become Swank employees and patrons and exhibit extreme ennui. Lyla enters and joins Jimmy, they enter Swank.)

JIMMY

This place looks kinda up-scale -

LYLA

Kind of?

JIMMY

Hey, you're talking to the original bleacher bum here, peanuts and Cracker Jacks are more my style -

(An Infernal Waiter offers them hors d'oeuvres.)

JIMMY

Try adding water -

(The Infernal Waiter exits.)

LYLA

Be nice, like you are to me.

JIMMY

Jeez, what's a porn director doing in a place like this?

LYLA

He can afford it.

JIMMY

I'm in the wrong line of work -

LYLA

No, I am -

(Geraint enters.)

LYLA

Here he is -

(to Geraint)

Geraint -

GERAINT

Lyla, you look enchanting -

LYLA

Geraint, thank you for seeing me. This is the man I told you about, Mr. Haw -

GERAINT

Let's go where we can be comfortable -

(Geraint and Lyla and Jimmy move to an elbow perch.)

JIMMY

Thank you for your time. I'm trying to get a lead on one of your performers, Shane Stensg ${\mathord{\text{--}}}$

GERAINT

Someone is paying you to do this?

JIMMY

Yeah, his sister. If you know where I can find him -

GERAINT

He was in the studio two weeks ago for some pick-up work, I haven't seen him since -

JIMMY

Uh-huh, yeah, but if there's anything you can tell me about his habits off the set -

GERAINT

That's not my business -

JIMMY

Sure. And you two never hang out, after work, at this place, like $\ -$

GERAINT

Shane's an employee, nothing more. And anyway I don't commune with the talent.

JIMMY

Maybe you commune with somebody who does -

LYLA

Jimmy -

GERAINT

Really Lyla, I don't approve of your charity case du jour -

Yeah? Well he's standing right here and he's not too sweet on you either, pal -

LYLA

Jimmy, please -

GERAINT

I think you should go now -

JIMMY

I'm gone -

(Jimmy steps away, Lyla follows him.)

LYLA

Wait, Jimmy, Jimmy please stop -

JIMMY

He knows something. I'll meet you later, now slap me -

(Lyla slaps him, Jimmy exits.)

LYLA

Bastard-!

(Lyla exits. Mopsa and Dorcas enter, Geraint motions and they cross to him, he whispers to them and they all exit together; Jimmy enters and follows them off. The Infernal Beings strike Swank and set the entrance to Hell: a red-rimmed portal leading down; the Infernal Beings exit. Geraint and Mopsa and Dorcas enter and descend into Hell; JIMMY enters in time to see them swallowed up, he retreats off. The Infernal Beings enter and strike the entrance to Hell and set the Pony Room: Mads works a crossword puzzle. Irene enters, the Infernal Beings exit. Irene speaks to Mads and hands him an envelope and exits. Lyla enters and paces; Jimmy enters.)

JIMMY

Hey -

(Lyla embraces him, she checks his face.)

JIMMY

Yeah, you pack quite a wallop -

I,YI,A

You asked me to hit you -

I know, that was good, he bought it -

LYLA

You asked me to hit you. And it helped -

JIMMY

Yeah, yeah it did -

(Jimmy nods, Mads pours him a drink.)

LYLA

Did you see where he went?

JIMMY

Uh-huh. But I dunno about this anymore, it's just getting more and more -

MADS

Lady was here, left this for you - (hands Jimmy the envelope)

LYLA

What is it?

JIMMY

More rent.

(to Mads)

Did she say anything?

MADS

Only, make sure you get it -

JIMMY

Jesus, the crap this Shane's mixed up in, the lady sure loves her brother -

MADS

Shane doesn't -

JIMMY

I know, I know. I so wanna drop this case -

LYLA

Then drop it.

JIMMY

My overhead's low, but it ain't that low -

LYLA

What're you gonna do?

The place I followed -

LYLA

Geraint -

JIMMY

Place I followed him to, it wasn't, it didn't have a sign, just a basement door in a blind alley. And he had those two girls with him -

LYLA

Did you go in?

JIMMY

No, and I don't think it's the kinda joint you can just walk into -

MADS

It isn't. You can't -

LYLA

You know it?

MADS

You don't want to go there -

LYLA

Why, what is it-?

JIMMY

Can you get me in?

MADS

I can show you where the service entrance is -

JIMMY

Okay, thanks. Geraint, is he a member or something?

MADS

It's his club, he owns it.

LYLA

How-?

JIMMY

So what is it? You can take me there now? (Mads nods)

LYLA

I want to -

No, wait for me at my office -

LYLA

Alright.

JIMMY

(to Mads)

I'll be right out -

(Mads exits.)

LYLA

Jimmy -

JIMMY

It'll be okay, nothing will happen -

LYLA

You don't know that -

JIMMY

I'll be careful.

LYLA

I know you will -

JIMMY

WAIT FOR ME -

LYLA

I'LL WAIT FOR YOU. BE WITH ME -

JIMMY

I'LL BE WITH YOU.

JIMMY and LYLA

WAIT -

BE WITH ME.

JIMMY

IT HELPS ME TO KNOW YOU'RE SAFE -

LYLA

I'M SAFE.

JIMMY

I NEED TO DO THIS BY MYSELF -

LYLA

I'LL BE SAFE.

JIMMY and LYLA

EVEN WHEN WE'RE NOT TOGETHER I'M WITH YOU - I THINK OF YOU,

I CARRY YOU WITH ME.

WAIT -

BE WITH ME.

WAIT -

LYLA

I'll wait for you, Jimmy.

(Jimmy exits.)

LYLA

I love you -

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike the Pony Room and set Hell: small patches of pulsating light. The Infernal Beings remove more costume pieces and become Hell employees and patrons; Jimmy and Mads enter, Mads shakes his head and exits. Jimmy crosses Hell: an Infernal Boy runs sobbing across the stage, an Infernal Woman bellows in rage and stomps after him. Jimmy comes to a patch of light: an Infernal Man strikes an Infernal Girl repeatedly, Jimmy slugs the Infernal Man and sends him sprawling.)

INFERNAL GIRL

No-!

(The Infernal Girl pushes Jimmy away and comforts the Infernal Man. GERAINT appears.)

GERAINT

Bravo, Mr. Hawkins. A shame your white knight act doesn't sell around here -

JIMMY

That's okay, I can be a plain asshole too -

(Jimmy lunges at Geraint, Two Infernal Thugs appear and grab him.)

GERAINT

My my, but your anger is sadly misplaced, Mr. Hawkins. You could take it out on the girl if you want... of course, you'd have to wait in line, she's one of our most popular rentals -

INFERNAL GIRL

Come on -

(The Infernal Girl helps the Infernal Man up and they exit.)

GERAINT

Welcome to Hell -

JIMMY

What is this place-?

GERAINT

Oh just another small business, filling a niche, satisfying needs. You'd be surprised the market for children these days, very robust, very -

JIMMY

You sonuvabitch-!

GERAINT

I wouldn't know -

(Mopsa and Dorcas enter licking blood from their fingers.)

GERAINT

Ah, ladies. Enjoying yourselves? Good -

(to Infernal Thugs)

Take him to room fourteen, ask him what he's really doing here for, oh, thirty minutes or so.

JIMMY

I told you -

GERAINT

I'm sorry but I don't believe your missing persons story, no one could possibly care this much about Shane Big-Dick -

(The Infernal Thugs drag Jimmy off.)

DORCAS

What's in room fourteen?

GERAINT

Nothing much, a quiet place. Have you ever wanted to be on the big screen? It's a remarkable experience -

(Geraint and Mopsa and Dorcas exit. The Infernal Beings reset Hell: a padded room with Jimmy sprawled on the floor beat to shit, Thug One rubbing his knuckles, Thug Two flossing.)

THUG ONE

You know, you can make all this go away, tell us what we want and we'll stop $\ -$

JIMMY

His sister, his sister hired me, it was his sister -

THUG ONE

Hold him -

(Thug Two hoists Jimmy, Thug One swings and Jimmy twists and the blow catches Thug Two in the face. Jimmy pummels the Infernal Thugs.)

JIMMY

It was his sister, his sister you dumbfucks, his sister hired me -

(Jimmy beats them to pulp and exits. The Infernal Beings strike Hell and set Jimmy's office: Lyla pacing. Irene enters, the Infernal Beings exit; music out. Irene knocks and enters Jimmy's office.)

LYLA

Hello-?

IRENE

Oh -

(Irene slashes Lyla's throat, Lyla collapses and bleeds out. Irene touches a finger to Lyla's blood and tastes it, she shivers. Irene exits the office, Jimmy enters without seeing her, she quickly turns and raises her hand as if to knock, then turns back.)

IRENE

Oh -

(Jimmy throws the envelope of money at her)

JIMMY

I quit -

IRENE

What happened to you, what -

JIMMY

I don't know where your brother is. Nobody else seems to know where your brother is, they just like beating me up when I ask them about it.

TRENE

But surely that means they must know something, they must -

JIMMY

Maybe. Maybe they're bored. Hell, I dunno, I'm done with it -

IRENE

But, the people who did this to you -

JIMMY

I'm done.

IRENE

There's nothing I can do to make you change your mind?

JIMMY

No.

IRENE

Please, keep the money -

(Irene exits, the Infernal Beings enter. Jimmy picks up the envelope, he enters his office, spots Lyla; music under. The Infernal Beings spin his office and reset it, they exit. Jimmy grabs his revolver from the desk drawer and exits. The Infernal Beings enter and strike Jimmy's office and set Hell: Geraint and Mopsa and Dorcas in bed having sex, an Infernal Lackey films them, the filmed images are projected above. The Infernal Beings exit; gunshots sound offstage.)

GERAINT

What was that? What's -

(Jimmy enters, he shoots the Infernal Lackey.)

GERAINT

No wait-!

JIMMY

You know what I want -

(Mopsa nods)

Let's go -

(she grabs some clothes)

Come on -

(Jimmy and Mopsa exit. The Infernal Beings enter and strike Hell and exit. Jimmy enters and pushes Mopsa across the stage and off. The Infernal Beings enter and set the lower floor of Val's warehouse: body parts litter the floor and hang from above, Val's device stands empty, a ladder leads up. The Infernal Beings remove the rest of their costumes and become corpses or slowly dying victims. Jimmy and Mopsa enter.)

JIMMY

Wait -

(eyeballs the limbs)

Toots... is Shane-?

(Mopsa nods)

Who, what did this -

(Mopsa points to the ladder, Jimmy motions her over and she climbs and he follows her. The Infernal Beings strike the warehouse and set Val's apartment: Val in bed. The Infernal Beings exit. Mopsa and Jimmy enter.)

VAL

Mmmm, what'd you bring me -

MOPSA

He has a gun -

VAL

Ooh, that's wicked!

JIMMY

What are you?

VAL

I'm anything you want me to be, baby. Got handcuffs? No? That's okay, we'll make our own fun -

JIMMY

I don't think so -

(Jimmy aims his revolver at Val and a shot rings out and Jimmy collapses, he drops the revolver. Irene enters holding a smoking pistol.)

IRENE

I'm sorry, Mr. Hawkins, but I couldn't let you shoot my daughter – $\$

VAL

Mummy-!

(runs to Irene)

I'm sorry I ran off, I've been naughty, a lot -

IRENE

That's alright, my love, girls will be girls. Let me look at you. Oh, but it took forever and a day to find you, I had to hire the nice detective -

JIMMY

Shane doesn't have a sister -

IRENE

Oh yes, he did. She was a dour, dried-up twig of a woman who only cared about daddy's money, which is quite substantial, I'm enjoying it immensely -

JIMMY

You killed her -

IRENE

Of course, it's what I do -

(Irene picks up Jimmy's revolver and hands it to Mopsa and begins to disrobe.)

IRENE

You see I know my little Valuska has a preference for size, and that if I followed, or rather you followed someone as endowed as the late Mr. Stensgaard, sooner or later you'd lead me to her. And you did. Thank you, Mr. Hawkins -

JIMMY

My pleasure.

IRENE

Oh, I don't think there'll be much of that, and anyway I doubt I could top the experience of making love to a real live pornstar -

JIMMY

You killed Lyla -

IRENE

Hm-mmm. C'est la vie, Mr. Hawkins -

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN GOING BELOW -

VAL

Ooh, this is gonna be so good -

(Val pulls Jimmy into bed.)

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN
GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

IRENE

It may not seem so from your perspective, but this does have a happy ending $\ -$

VAL

Hurry, mummy, I want to find the treasure -

(Val digs her finger into Jimmy's wound, Irene crawls into bed with them.)

INFERNAL BEINGS

GOING DOWN, DOWN GOING BELOW, GOING DOWN -

(Val and Irene eat Jimmy, Mopsa watches, Jimmy passes out. Lights blackout. Lights up Val's bed: Jimmy tosses and turns and bolts awake.)

JIMMY

What-?

(gets out of bed)

WHY AM I STILL HERE?
WHY AM I STILL ALIVE?
WHY WOULD THEY DO THIS,
WHAT COULD THEIR PURPOSE BE WHAT WOULD THEY HOPE TO GAIN
BY LEAVING ME THIS WAY
LEAVING ME ALIVE -

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike Val's apartment and set the lower floor of the warehouse and exit.)

JIMMY

WHAT DO I DO NOW?
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?
WHAT GOOD IS LIVING WHEN THERE'S NOTHING TO LIVE FOR AND WHY DO I EVEN CARE
ABOUT WHERE I GO FROM HERE?

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike Val's warehouse and set Swank and exit.)

I'VE LOST EVERYTHING I'VE EVER CARED FOR,

EVERYTHING I'VE EVER LOVED
I'LL NEVER FIND ANY SOLACE,

NEVER HAVE ANY PEACE,

NEVER FIND ANOTHER REASON FOR LIVING IN THIS WORLD,

FOR BEING IN THIS WORLD -

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike Swank and set the Iguana and exit.)

JIMMY

I can't get back what I've lost, but I can still have -

REVENGE-!

I'll kill those fuckin' bitches -

I'LL TRACK THEM DOWN,

I'LL HUNT THEM,

I'LL RUN THEM TO THE GROUND -

I'LL HAVE GRIM SATISFACTION AND BATHE IN THEIR BLOOD,

I'LL RIP THEM TO PIECES

AND MAKE THEM WISH THEY WERE NEVER BORN -

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike the Iguana and set the Pony Room and exit.)

JIMMY

BUT -

THAT WON'T BRING BACK MY LYLA,
THAT WON'T FILL MY EMPTY HEART,
I CAN'T BRING BACK MY ONE TRUE LOVE MY ONE TRUE LOVE,
MY -

(The Infernal Beings enter and strike the Pony Room and set Jimmy's office and exit.)

JIMMY

HER VOICE LIKE A WHISPER, HER HAIR LIKE A SUNSET, HER EYES LIKE A WINDOW TO HEAVEN, EYES LIKE A WINDOW TO HEAVEN -

Oh god -

WHY DID THEY LEAVE ME ALIVE -

(Kathy enters.)

KATHY

They didn't, Jimmy -

(Jimmy embraces her; Lyla enters and she and Kathy lead Jimmy to a glow of light and off. Mopsa enters and pulls the curtain closed. Lights blackout, music out.)

THE BIG KISS-OFF - Recital Version of "Damned" Copyright © Jason Ferté

JIMMY

It was a dark and stormy night. No really, it was dark and there was a storm and unbeknownst to me - a gal named Val and a guy named Shane were having a thing.

(song music under/MC 1)

VAL

WOW -

SHANE

WOW -

VAL and SHANE

WOW -

SHANE

THAT WAS IN -

VAL SHANE

THAT WAS IN - CREDIBLE -

VAL

CREDIBLE.

SHANE

FAN -

VAL SHANE

THAT WAS - TASTIC -

VAL and SHANE

UNBELIEVABLE.

SHANE

YOU REALLY BLEW MY MIND -

VAL SHANE

I CAN'T- YOU -

VAL

BELIEVE HOW I -

VAL and SHANE

FEEL RIGHT NOW LIKE -

VAL

My head almost exploded!

SHANE

Mine freakin' did -

WOW -

VAL

WOW -

SHANE

WOW, THAT WAS THE -

VAL SHANE

THAT WAS ALRIGHT. BEST I'VE EVER -

SHANE

HAD, THE BEST I'VE EVER -

Hey, whaduya mean alright, I'll show you alright you little vixen - $\!\!\!\!$

GOD, YOU'RE AMAZING -

VAL

I WAS JUST TEASING -

VAL SHANE

YOU. I'VE -

SHANE

GOT TO HAVE YOU-

VAL SHANE

I WANT YOU - HAVE YOU -

VAL and SHANE

AGAIN, AND AGAIN -

VAL

LET'S DO IT AGAIN NOW -

VAL SHANE

RIGHT NOW - AND -

SHANE

MAKE IT LAST FOR -

VAL SHANE

TONIGHT - EVER -

VAL and SHANE

FOR -

VAL SHANE

TONIGHT. EVER.

SHANE

Okay -

FOR TONIGHT.

What?

WHAT DID I SAY?

IT WAS ONLY AN EXPRESSION, IT'S JUST WORDS, BABY, NOT A PROPOSAL.

Look -

WE'RE BOTH HERE FOR THE SAME THING -

VAL

YES -

SHANE

WE BOTH WANT MORE OF THE -

VAL and SHANE

SAME THING -

SHANE

MUCH MORE OF -

VAL and SHANE

THE SAME THING, YES -

VAL

GIVE ME -

VAL and SHANE

MORE OF THE SAME THING,

MORE LIKE THAT, YES -

VAL SHANE

MOVE YOUR KNEE - AND GIVE ME -

VAL and SHANE

MORE!

GOD, YES -

MORE!

I WANT MORE AND MORE AND -

SHANE

THAT'S MY GIRL -

SHANE (continued)

What? You're kidding -

THAT'S -

IT'S A PET NAME,

ONLY A PET NAME.

I USE IT WITH EVERYONE,

IT'S NOT JUST FOR YOU -

VAL

Thanks, that helps.

SHANE

Aw, don't be that way -

YOU KNOW WHAT I AM,

YOU KNOW WHAT I DO.

BUT WHATEVER I AM

I'M HERE WITH YOU.

IT'S NOT FOREVER, IT'S FOR TONIGHT.

YOU'RE NOT MY GIRL -

TURN OUT THE LIGHT.

YOU'RE A HOT BABE AND LET'S DO IT ONE MORE TIME.

AND MAYBE -

VAL

AND MAYBE -

SHANE

AND MAYBE -

VAL and SHANE

AND MAYBE WE CAN DO IT -

VAL

LIKE -

VAL

SHANE

TWO MORE TIMES? TOMORROW -

SHANE

NIGHT?

Omigod -

WHAT'S WRONG WITH TOMORROW NIGHT?

VAL

Nothing.

SHANE

Hey -

VAL

No, you're right -

I'M SORRY I WAS CROSS,
IT'S MY BAD AND IT DOESN'T MEAN A THING.

Lay back -

C'MON, LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU, BABY I KNOW WHAT YOU LIKE AND I LIKE WHAT YOU DO AND YOU KNOW
YOU WANT TO DO IT TO ME TOO -

SHANE

Now you're talking -

VAL

Where were we? Oh yes -

YOU WERE FINDING YOUR INNER COWBOY PORNSTAR, AND GETTING GOOD AND READY -

SHANE

Oh yeah, I'm gettin' ready -

VAL

GET IT READY,
GET IT GOOD AND READY FOR ME GET IT READY FOR ME,
GOOD AND READY FOR ME,
READY AND GOOD, GOOD AND READY FOR -

There, all ready -

(into scene change music/MC 2, then out)

JIMMY

That was the scene change music. But back to my thrill-a-minute life: my name is Jimmy Hawkins and I'm a licensed private detective when the D.A. feels like cutting me slack. When he doesn't, I drink. I'd been unlicensed for a few weeks and was enjoying a late afternoon siesta in my office... okay, I was passed out from an all-points bender when - she walked in. I could tell right off she wasn't my type, and I got the bullettrain impression I wasn't hers. But she had a story to tell so I listened. Sort of.

Start at the beginning. What's your name?

(song music under/MC 3)

IRENE

My name is -

JIMMY

OW, MY HEAD,

MY HEAD,

IT FEELS LIKE A LOAD OF BRICKS LANDED ON MY HEAD -

Where's the aspirin?

OKAY, WHO IS SHE?

AND WHAT THE HELL IS SHE GOING ON AND ON ABOUT -

What? Who's she talking about? Whatever -

I NEED A VACATION.

I NEED TO GET OUT THIS OFFICE,

OUT OF THIS TOWN, OUT OF THIS LIFE THAT BURIES ME UNDER OTHER PEOPLE'S PALLID MYSTERIES,

THEIR BLOATED MISERIES -

It's killing me.

IRENE

What?

JIMMY

Nothing.

I NEED TO GET AWAY FROM HERE I NEED TO ESCAPE,
JUST GO, JUST -

Yeah, like that'll happen -

IRENE

You see he has to call me, daddy put the trust fund in my name, there's more than enough for both of us but he made me the only signatory –

JIMMY

Uh-huh, right.

I USED TO CARE ABOUT STRANGERS THEY'D STEP THROUGH MY DOOR
AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT THEIR LIVES, THEIR LOVES,
THEIR HOPES AND FEARS
AND ASK ME, BEG ME, PAY ME
TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE DANGER.

Some hero-for-hire -

TRENE

It's been over a month now, and he never goes this long without contacting me. Maybe I'm being overly protective but he's still my little brother, my only family -

JIMMY

Sure.

I'VE DONE EVERYTHING FOR THESE PEOPLE,
EVERYTHING THEY'VE ASKED FOR AND MORE I'VE GIVEN ALL OF MYSELF,
I'VE BEEN STABBED AND SHOT AND CLUBBED AND
STEPPED ON,
RUN OVER,
BEAT DOWN INTO THE GUTTER,
AND THEY JUST KEEP ON COMING -

I'm not making a difference, none at all.

TRENE

This is the address. I've been there once but it's not my clientele, I didn't do any more than run in and run out, I'm afraid -

JIMMY

More my kinda joint, huh? Touché.

IRENE

I didn't mean -

JIMMY

Forget it. This the best place to find him?

IRENE

Yes. I'm sorry if I've offended -

JIMMY

ONCE MORE,

ONCE MORE

UNTO THE BREACH -

AND WHY NOT?

IT'S WHAT I'M GOOD FOR,

WHY SHOULD THE ENGLISH DEAD HAVE ALL THE FUN?

STOP THINKING -

STOP THINKING OF THE WAR,

FOCUS ON THE BATTLE.

WHY THE HELL SHOULDN'T WHAT'S-HER-NAME HERE GET -

Whatever it is, I dunno -

IRENE

Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. You can reach me at the number on the back ${\mathord{\text{--}}}$

JIMMY

Jimmy. And I'll need a retainer -

IRENE

Is five hundred enough? There's also a picture of him -

JIMMY

Fine. Thanks, er -

IRENE

MY NAME IS IRENE STENSGAARD, AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. PLEASE FIND MY BROTHER SHANE FOR ME, MR. HAWKINS -

He's all I've got -

JIMMY

I'll find him.

What a lousy heel -

HERE'S TO ANOTHER WILD GOOSE CHASE,
AND HERE'S TO MY LAME-ASS EXISTENCE.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR PEOPLE GETTING THEMSELVES LOST
AND OTHER PEOPLE WANTING ME TO FIND THEM,
AND PAYING ME DECENT MONEY -

I'd have to get a job.

(into song music/MC 4)

IRENE

- I WONDER IF HE HEARD ME?
- I WONDER IF I SAID TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH -
- I DON'T THINK HE WAS LISTENING VERY WELL,
- I HOPE MY TRUST ISN'T MISPLACED.

I HOPE THIS MAN IS MORE THAN HE SEEMS - WELL, AT LEAST WHAT HE SEEMS, BECAUSE HE DOES SEEM THE MAN FOR THE JOB, THE MAN FOR -

I HOPE HE CALLS ME SOON -

(into scene change music/MC 5, then Pony Room music/MC 6)

JIMMY

A dive called the Pony Room was where she'd said I'd find her little brother - and where I'd hoped to find my next drink. What I didn't know was that Shane's tête-à-tête had ended with

the big kiss-off: he was dead, and the minx had done him in. That's what the scary music was about. Anyway, I asked around about him — and a big guy in a dress took offense. He told me Shane didn't have any sister. Then he relocated my jaw to Detroit, bounced me out of the place and kicked me to the curb like I was bucket of butcher scraps. Dress or no dress, the big guy could punch.

(into scene change music/MC 7, then out)

I crawled to the nearest payphone, called Miss Irene Stensgaard and told her I was quits. Then I crawled back to my office and got cozy with my Scotch.

(scene change music under/MC 8, then out)

Just my luck - she showed up again. To gloat, I figured.

(song music under/MC 9)

IRENE

PERHAPS I SHOULD EXPLAIN A LITTLE MORE. SHANE IS AS EMBARRASSED OF ME AS I SOMETIMES AM OF HIM, HE WOULDN'T TELL HIS FRIENDS ABOUT ME, MUCH LESS -

He just wouldn't.

JIMMY

I thought you said you see him like, every few weeks -

IRENE

HE CALLS ME FOR THE MONEY, I CAN HAVE IT TRANSFERRED DIRECTLY TO HIS ACCOUNT BUT ONLY SO MUCH AT A TIME.

That's another of daddy's stipulations.

SHANE CALLS ME, I TRANSFER THE MONEY, HE SPENDS IT. WE NEVER SEE EACH OTHER -

JIMMY

But you won't transfer the money unless he calls -

IRENE

NO. THAT'S MY STIPULATION. HE WANTS A FREE RIDE, AND I WANT -

It doesn't matter what I want.

JIMMY

No, no it doesn't.

IRENE

HAVE I CONVINCED YOU, MR. HAWKINS?

JIMMY

Yeah.

IRENE

WILL YOU WORK FOR ME STILL?

JIMMY

Yeah -

IRENE

THANK YOU.

(into scene change music/MC 10, then Hot Stuff music/MC 11)

JIMMY

Yeah, I was a sucker alright, and a cheap one. And Shane was a model, I went to his agent's office but they said they hadn't seen him in weeks. They gave me a copy of his most recent gig: Blippo the Clown's Party Time Catalogue of Party Supplies. He was in there all right, the doting daddy at his kid's pirate-themed birthday party. Weird. But what caught my eye was daddy Shane's missus: what a honey. She had curves in all my favorite places, and a face you could kiss for days and not get bored. A real living angel - I just hoped the eye-patch was for the kiddie party.

(into scene change music/MC 12, then Pony Room music/MC 13)

I went back to the Pony Room - and there was my dream-pirate, both eyes in perfect working order and all curves as advertised. I braced her about Shane, she said she didn't like him and didn't know where he was. I made up more questions to ask her, like her name - Lyla Butterfield. Lyla Butterfield... I just wanted to keep looking into those eyes.

(into song/MC 14)

WHAT IS THIS, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

IMPOSSIBLE,
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE -

I KNOW WHAT LUST IS,
I'VE SEEN TITS AND ASS OF EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE,
EVERY CONCEIVABLE SHAPE AND SIZE AND I'VE PHOTOGRAPHED THEM ALL IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE
POSITION DOING EVERYTHING IMAGINABLE,
AND A FEW THINGS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE BUT TRUE.

T KNOW WHAT LUST IS -

This is nothing -

I KNOW WHAT HEARTACHE IS,

I SHOW THE PHOTOS I TAKE TO THE PEOPLE WHO PAY ME TO TAKE THEM,

TO THE HUSBANDS AND WIVES,

JILTED LOVERS HURT TOO DEEP FOR WORDS.

BUT I SEE IT IN THEIR EYES, AND I FEEL IT TOO.

I KNOW WHAT HEARTACHE IS -

And I've had my fill of it, all of it.

I'VE LEARNED ABOUT GUILT -

The way people toss aside the best thing that's ever happened to them in a moment of blind panic, and then regret it for the rest of their lives -

AND I'VE LEARNED ABOUT HATE.

And how other people make a different choice, they do nothing and let that oozing, puss-filled wound in their heart grow and fester and shade everything they feel and do until their entire world becomes a stinking, stagnant cesspool of -

HOW CAN THIS BE?
HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING TO ME?
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE,
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE -

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

IT'S THE FACE OF AN ANGEL, A VOICE SOFTER THAN LIGHT,
AND A TOUCH LIKE VELVET, LIGHTER THAN VELVET, BUT HEAVY AS
A BLOW TO THE HEART -

AND IT'S HAPPENING TO ME,

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

I LOOK IN HER EYES, AND ALL THAT I SEE -

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

Nothing else matters -

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS.

(into Pony room music/MC 15)

Yeah, I had it bad. And she had all the interest of a gourmet chef looking at a happy meal - absolutely none. I felt like a cheeseburger and fries, no toy. But then the big guy in the

dress showed up and bounced me into the street again and I felt right as rain. Everything in the universe was in its place: beautiful women spurned me, transvestites beat me up, and I couldn't detect hay in a haystack.

(into scene change music/MC 16, then out)

I crawled back to my office again and tried to embalm myself with hooch. All it brought was dreams, the kind I try not to have. About Kathy ${\mathord{\text{-}}}$

(song music under/MC 17)

KATHY

I used to volunteer at this little theatre, they'd have me help them with little things, like -

I'D SIT BACKSTAGE DURING THE SHOW, AND WHEN THE PHONE WAS SUPPOSED TO RING, I'D RING IT.

How they did this, they'd cue me with a little light, a little blue light, when it came on I knew my cue was coming up and when it went out that'd be my cue to ring the phone.

I LIKED THAT LITTLE THEATRE, I FELT LIKE I WAS PART OF SOMETHING DURING THE SHOW, BUT I NEVER WENT OUT WITH THE ACTORS AFTERWARDS, THEY NEVER ASKED ME TO, SO I'D JUST GO HOME.

One night the little light never came on, I knew the show real well 'cause I'd been doing it for weeks, so when it was supposed to ring – $\,$

I RANG THE PHONE ANYWAY.

After the show, no one came to thank me, no one said: oops I forgot to cue you, thanks for saving my ass.

THEY ALL WENT OUT, WITHOUT ME, AND I WENT HOME. THEN I MET JIMMY -

(music out)

JIMMY

I knew how that dream ended, I didn't want to think about it. Luckily Lyla and the transvestite banged on my door, and I got to relive recent failures instead of long past ones. Lyla felt bad about my encounter with the gutter at the hands of Toots, the guy in the dress, and had brought him along - to apologize. Turned out Toots wasn't such a big meany, just a bigger lush than even me - he apologized all right, then drank the rest of

my Scotch. We were bosom buddies, in record time. But Lyla, she was a fish of a different color, one I couldn't figure out. I made eyes at her, her voice dropped an octave and she made eyes back. Toots got the hint and left. And my schizo-aloof pirate-angel melted into my arms.

(scene change music under/MC 18, then out)

Yeah, like that. A whole lotta that. Later we compared sordid life stories - hers was bad, mine was worse:

(music under/MC 19, then out)

Kathy had died in a car crash, and I'd been the driver at fault.

(music under/MC 20, then out)

I told Lyla I wasn't sure I knew how to love, she said she didn't care. I rolled with that one.

(music under/MC 21)

LYLA

I KNOW WHAT LOVE IS -

(and into scene change music, then Iguana music/MC 22)

JIMMY

I met up with Toots at another haunt of Shane's, a dress-up club called the Iguana: Toots blended, I looked like the IRS come to do an audit. I kept my head down - and recognized these two decked-out dames from the Pony Room, so I tailed them. Toots wasn't so fortunate: he bumped into Val, and she led him back to a dark place of death.

(into song/MC 23)

CHORUS

GOING DOWN, DOWN

GOING BELOW -

GOING DOWN, DOWN

GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

GOING DOWN, DOWN

GOING BELOW -

GOING DOWN, DOWN

GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

GOING DOWN, DOWN

CHORUS (continued)

GOING BELOW,
GOING DOWN -

GOING DOWN, DOWN
GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

(music out)

JIMMY

And she killed him.

(scene change music under/MC 24, then out)

But I didn't know or care, I'd lost the glimmer twins and gone back to the office. I was with Lyla... Lyla. But you don't need to know about what happened there.

(scene change music under/MC 25, into song/MC 26)

Meanwhile Val felt kinda bad about Toots -

VAL

TELL ME, TELL ME,
TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME -

SHOW ME, SHOW ME, SHOW ME THAT YOU CARE FOR ME -

BE MINE, BE MINE, BE MINE FOR ALL TIME -

AND I'LL BE YOURS FOREVER MORE.

JIMMY

Sort of, I dunno, I wasn't there. But do you get the picture Val was one twisted sister? I hadn't met her yet and she was giving me the creeps.

(scene change music under/MC 27, then out)

I called the Stensgaard broad, told her about the goose-egg: no dice finding her brother. I suggested she go to the police, she begged me to stay on the case - and tripled my fee. I stayed on the case.

(scene change music under/MC 28, into Swank music/MC 29)

Lyla took me to meet Shane's agent at a swank watering hole called... Swank. Lighting so indirect it came from next door. No tables, just these little elbow perches big enough for a drink and an ashtray, sans ashtray. And waiters straight outta

central casting, killing time until their big break and making sure everyone knew they were just a spin of the cosmic wheel away from being you, eating those stupid cucumber sandwiches with the crust trimmed off and the foofy toothpicks poking out of them they were carrying around on enameled trays. If I'd been a poodle, I'd have been in heaven. The agent, Geraint, fit right in: oily attitude straining the seams of a Seersucker suit. Guess I missed the fashion update, cuz everybody was wearing them. This case got weirder by the minute. Geraint was cagey and said some things I didn't like. I said some things he didn't like and left - to spy on him. I hated leaving Lyla in the lurch like that but I had a tingly feeling about Geraint, he knew more than he was letting on. Sure enough he hooked right up with the glimmer twins, popping out of nowhere and latching onto Geraint like lampreys onto a shark. Something was moving forward, and I felt like I was on a roll. I followed them when they left.

(into scene change music/MC 30, and then Hell music)

I followed them alright, to a deserted alley in the warehouse district: no lights, black as pitch. I stayed hidden. A door opened bleeding red luminescence - and swallowed them as into the mouth of Hell.

(and into scene change music, then Pony Room music/MC 31)

I got out of there quick, made my way back to the Pony Room. Lyla was there, I explained why I'd ditched her and what I'd seen tailing Geraint. Mads the bartender said the Stensgaard woman had dropped off more money - and that he knew the place Geraint had disappeared into and could get me inside. Lyla begged me not to go but a job was a job, and I was getting well paid for this one.

(into song/MC 32)

WAIT FOR ME -

LYLA

I'LL WAIT FOR YOU. BE WITH ME -

JIMMY

I'LL BE WITH YOU.

JIMMY and LYLA

WAIT -

BE WITH ME.

JIMMY

IT HELPS ME TO KNOW YOU'RE SAFE -

I,YI,A

I'M SAFE.

JIMMY

I NEED TO DO THIS BY MYSELF -

LYLA

I'LL BE SAFE.

JIMMY and LYLA

EVEN WHEN WE'RE NOT TOGETHER I'M WITH YOU - I THINK OF YOU, I CARRY YOU WITH ME.
WAIT BE WITH ME. WAIT -

LYLA

I love you, Jimmy.

(into scene change music/MC 33, then Hell music/MC 34)

JIMMY

Mads got me in the back way, then split. I didn't blame him. The place was a chamber of horrors, a playground where the filthy rich indulged their ugliest vices, cash payment only. I didn't last long on the sly, Geraint's thugs got the drop on me. Turned out he ran the joint and didn't believe my story about trying to find Shane for his sister - Shane didn't have a sister, he said. He ordered his goons to take me down to the basement and work me over for the real dope.

(into scene change music/MC 35, then Room 14 music/MC 36)

They gave it their best shot but the Shane story was the only story I knew. I was stubborn about it. They got sloppy, I flipped the tables on them - and sorta lost it, took out all my frustrations. After I calmed down, I picked myself up and got out of there while the getting was good.

(into scene change music/MC 37, then out)

I bumped into Irene Stensgaard outside my office and I threw her money back at her, I'd had enough. She didn't fight to keep me on the case this time, just nodded and left. I needed a drink, bad. I went into my office - and found Lyla, murdered.

(scene change music under/MC 38)

I screamed to the heavens. I didn't know who'd killed her or why, but I was willing to bet somebody did: Geraint. I grabbed my pistol and left.

(into Hell music/MC 39)

JIMMY (continued)

I went back to Geraint's club, found him with the glimmer twins. He tried to get away, I shot him. One of the twins made a break for it and got the same treatment. I made the other one take me where I wanted to go. I didn't know where that place was and I didn't care - I wanted retribution, and if it took a rain of hot lead to get it, I was ready.

(into scene change music/MC 40, then Val's warehouse/MC 41)

The twin led me to another warehouse, even more deserted, to: Val.

(into scene change music/MC 42, then Val's bedroom/MC 43)

She was like a child, happy to see me and didn't care a bit that I had a pistol aimed at her heart. She may not have been guilty of Lyla's murder - she just sat there and talked nonsense - but I figured she was guilty enough. Before I could make my play somebody stepped from the shadows and took a shot at me: it was Irene Stensgaard. Her aim was good, I dropped my pistol and slid to the floor, a bullet in my gut. And stuffy, prim Miss Stensgaard thanked me for doing the job she'd wanted me to do all along: lead her to her errant daughter, Valuska. Irene wasn't Shane's sister, but she knew her little Valuska would seek out the hunkiest guy around, and true enough that had been pretty-boy Shane. So she'd hired me for the reverse trace. It was clever, but I was bleeding out fast - and the Irene woman just laughed. And the penny dropped: like mother like daughter, it was she who'd killed my Lyla.

(into song music/MC 44)

CHORUS

GOING DOWN, DOWN GOING BELOW -

GOING DOWN, DOWN
GOING WAY DEEP DOWN -

GOING DOWN, DOWN
GOING BELOW, GOING DOWN -

(into scene change music/MC 45)

JIMMY

They were monsters, both of them. But before I met my final fate, I thankfully blacked out. And then I came to again, and they were gone.

(into song/MC 46)

JIMMY (continued)

WHY AM I STILL HERE?
WHY AM I STILL ALIVE?
WHY WOULD THEY DO THIS,
WHAT COULD THEIR PURPOSE BE WHAT WOULD THEY HOPE TO GAIN
BY LEAVING ME THIS WAY
LEAVING ME ALIVE -

WHAT DO I DO NOW?
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?
WHAT GOOD IS LIVING WHEN THERE'S NOTHING TO LIVE FOR AND WHY DO I EVEN CARE
ABOUT WHERE I GO FROM HERE?

I'VE LOST EVERYTHING I'VE EVER CARED FOR,

EVERYTHING I'VE EVER LOVED
I'LL NEVER FIND ANY SOLACE,

NEVER HAVE ANY PEACE,

NEVER FIND ANOTHER REASON FOR LIVING IN THIS WORLD,

FOR BEING IN THIS WORLD -

I can't get back what I've lost, but I can still have -

REVENGE-!

I'll kill those two witches -

I'LL TRACK THEM DOWN,

I'LL HUNT THEM,
I'LL RUN THEM TO THE GROUND I'LL HAVE GRIM SATISFACTION AND BATHE IN THEIR BLOOD,
I'LL RIP THEM TO PIECES
AND MAKE THEM WISH THEY WERE NEVER BORN -

BUT -

THAT WON'T BRING BACK MY LYLA,
THAT WON'T FILL MY EMPTY HEART,
I CAN'T BRING BACK MY ONE TRUE LOVE MY ONE TRUE LOVE, MY -

HER VOICE LIKE A WHISPER,
HER HAIR LIKE A SUNSET,
HER EYES LIKE A WINDOW TO HEAVEN,
EYES LIKE A WINDOW TO HEAVEN -

Oh god -

WHY DID THEY LEAVE ME ALIVE -

KATHY

Jimmy, they didn't -

LYLA

Come on, Jimmy, time to go -

JIMMY

And I got it then, it was the big kiss-off for me. There was nothing for it, so I went to the light.

(music out)

The University of Portland Department of Performing and Fine Arts Presents a

Graduate Recital by Rachel Sakry

Wednesday, February 27, 2008, 12:30 PM, Mago Hunt Center Recital Hall

The Big Kiss-Off: A Musical Noir

Book and lyrics by Jason Ferté Music by Rachel Sakry Musical direction by Rob Fishel

CAST

Jimmy
Val/Lyla/Infernal Being
Shane/Infernal Being
Irene/Kathy/Infernal Being
Infernal Beings

Ky Fifer Audrey Voon Andrew Wade Jamie Hettenbach Dustin Grote, David Harrell, Kory Keeney

ORCHESTRA

Clarinets Bri Caldwell, Kate Conroy-Yockim, Emily

Rico

Tenor Saxophone Teige Weidner
Percussion Pamela Wellner
Piano/Accordion Rob Fishel

ViolinKolleen UppinghouseViolaAmanda MyersBassZachary FaltersackPage TurnerSarah Shewbert

MUSICAL NUMBERS

"Wow" Val and Shane "Ow, My Head" Jimmy and Irene

"I Wonder If He Heard Me" Irene Pony Room I Orchestra

"Perhaps I Should Explain" Irene and Jimmy

Hott Stuff Productions

Pony Room II

"What Is This?"

Jimmy

Pony Room III

"I Used to Volunteer"

The Iguana

"Coing Down"

Orchestra

Unformal Point

"Going Down" Infernal Beings

"Tell Me" Val
Swank Orchestra
Pony Room IV Orchestra

"Wait for Me" Jimmy and Lyla Hell I & II Orchestra

Val's Warehouse & Bedroom Orchestra
"Going Down" (reprise) Infernal Beings

"Why Am I Still Here?" Jimmy

SYNOPSIS

The Big Kiss-Off is a concert version of a full-length musical; in place of the script, it features narration specially written for this recital. The story centers on **Jimmy Hawkins**, a burned-out detective with a slightly tarnished heart of gold. When a new client, **Irene**, hires him to search for her missing brother, **Shane**, Jimmy ventures into an underground world of seedy nightclubs in order to track him down. Along the way, he meets and falls in love with **Lyla**, an associate of Shane's. With this new love comes the possibility that Jimmy will finally be able to let go of **Kathy**, a past love who's been haunting him for years. Meanwhile, the case goes from bad to worse, and Jimmy finally calls it quits, but not before Lyla is killed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jimmy's pursuit for revenge leads him back to Irene, who reveals her true identity and motivation for finding Shane: she's not his sister; she was really looking for her errant daughter, **Val**, a mysterious creature with a voracious appetite for human flesh. Irene correctly guessed that Shane, a famous model, would become one of Val's victims, and that a search for Shane would lead to Val. Having learned all this, Jimmy becomes Val and Irene's next victim.

BIOGRAPHIES

Bri Caldwell (*clarinet*) is a senior majoring in early childhood and elementary education, with a minor in music. She currently studies clarinet under Dr. Igor Shakhman and previously studied with Andreas Schablas at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. Bri student teaches full time in a kindergarten classroom at Buckman Elementary, an art and music magnet school in SE Portland. In August, she will begin her new position at the Dresden International School in Dresden, Germany, as a second grade teacher.

Kate Conroy-Yockim (*clarinet*), a junior accounting major, is originally from Roseberg, Oregon. She has played clarinet for ten years and is in her fifth semester of private instruction with Igor Shakhman.

Zachary Faltersack (*bass*) was born in Lake Oswego, OR. He is a sophomore majoring in music and computer Science.

Jason Ferte (*writer*) has worked in theatre, mostly in Portland, for 30 years. Much of that work has been freelance designs and builds, but he has held salaried positions: Technical Director (Lakewood Theatre Company), Company Stage Manager (Carousel Company Theatre for Children), Scenic Artist/Carpenter (C. Whitten Design and Display). This is his second musical.

Ky Fifer (*Jimmy*) attends Portland State University. He can currently be seen in *Tonya and Nancy: The Rock Opera!* For more info on Ky, visit www.myspace.com/kyfifer.

Rob Fishel (*musical director*) received his M.A.T. in Music from Portland State University in May 2007. His musical activities are many and varied, but he is steadily engaged as Music Director for Pioneer UMC in St. Johns, and spends each summer making musical theater with children in his hometown of Hereford, Maryland. Rob is both grateful and honored to be working with Rachel and Jason again on *The Big Kiss-Off*, and hopes that the future will hold many more such opportunities.

Dustin Grote (*Infernal Being*) is a junior double majoring in organizational communication and psychology with a minor in Spanish. Though not a music or theatre major, he spends a lot of time in Mago Hunt with University Singers and the a capella group Road Less Traveled.

David Harrell (*Infernal Being*) is currently a junior with a double major in Drama and Life Science. Hailing from Spokane, Washington, he is happy to be living and working in Portland. Although his performance focus is on the theatre, he has also done quite a bit of vocal work, especially with the University Singers and his a cappella group, The Road Less Traveled. Anticipating graduation in May of 2009, he plans to find work in Portland or the surrounding area that will follow from his hard-earned degree.

Jamie Hettenbach (*Irene/Kathy*) is a first year graduate student studying vocal performance with Judith Montgomery. She is originally from Evansville, IN and received her BA in music, emphasis vocal performance from Murray State University in Murray, KY. Jamie is interested in the music of women composers and hopes to pursue this area of music throughout her career. Her plans after earning her MA include completing a doctorate and teaching voice at the college level.

Kory Keeney (*Infernal Being*) is a third year student, studying voice under the direction of John Boelling. He thoroughly enjoys performing on any stage, especially in theatre, and will be seen in *Threepenny Opera* later this spring.

Amanda Myers (*viola*) is from Outlook, Washington and is a junior nursing student with music and psychology minors. She has played viola for thirteen years and is currently studying viola under Kathy Follett. Her plans for the future are to finish the CD she is developing with the band Shakespeake, graduate from the University of Portland next year, work as a nurse in a foreign country, attend the University of Washington's Advance Practice Forensic Nurse Specialists program to obtain a Master of Nursing degree, and be able to continue playing viola in her spare time.

Emily Rico (*clarinet*) is a senior music major. She previously studied clarinet under the instruction of Randall Hall and is currently studying with Igor Shakhman. After graduation, Emily will begin working on a second degree in music therapy.

Rachel Sakry (*composer*): Originally from Eagan, Minnesota, Rachel moved to Portland in 2001, after graduating from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. She currently studies composition with John Paul; her previous teachers include Lew Spratlan and Robert Rathmell. After graduating from UP, Rachel hopes to find work in print music publishing or film score orchestration. Eventually, she would like to continue her studies and teach at the college level. *The Big Kiss-Off* is her third musical.

Audrey Voon (*Val/Lyla*) is in her third year, studying Vocal Performance and French. She is a proud member (and alto section leader) of the University Singers and currently studies voice with Judith Montgomery. Other appearances on the UP stage include her work in the chorus of Mock's Crest's *Ruddigore* (2007) and *H.M.S. Pinafore* (2006), as well as Mrs. March in UP's *Little Women* (2007) and Frenchy in *Sweet Charity* (2006). After graduating, Audrey hopes to continue on the track of vocal and stage performance, as well as teaching music and voice to children and young adults.

Andrew Wade (*Shane*) is a junior music major and English minor, from Milwaukie, OR, who studies voice under the instruction of John Boelling. He hopes to have a career in composition and performance after graduation.

Teige Weidner (*tenor sax*) is a senior music major who currently studies saxophone under Jeff Homan. Teige is excited to be a part of the first production of BKO and he would like to thank his fellow staff members in Villa Maria for helping him to make time for his music.

Thesis Author Statement of Understanding

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Appendix D