

PERFECT HARMONY

"Hallelujah"

Written by

Lesley Wake Webster

Directed by

Jason Winer



BLUE REVISED DRAFT - March 15, 2019

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PERFECT HARMONY
"Hallelujah"
Blue Revised Draft

CAST

ARTHUR.....Bradley Whitford
GINNY.....Anna Camp
WAYNE.....Will Greenberg
ADAMS.....Tymberlee Hill
DWAYNE.....Geno Segers
REVEREND JAX.....Rizwan Manji
CASH.....Spencer Allport
PASTOR MAGNUS FILBURN.....John Carroll Lynch
ROBBY.....Dominic Burgess
GLENN.....Gedde Watanabe
KARLA.....Desi Dennis-Dylan
LEANNE.....Shanice Williams
EMCEE.....Kiva Jump

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SETS

INTERIORS

Arthur's Car
Second First Church
 Practice Room
 Chapel
Moonbow Dairy
Ginny's House
 Kitchen
 Entry
 Dining Room
Arthur's Houseboat
 Living Room
 Kitchen
 Bedroom
Festival Auditorium
 Stage Wing
 Stage
 Seats

EXTERIORS

Arthur's Car
Church Cemetery
Church Parking Lot
Ginny's House
Arthur's Houseboat

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

1 INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - NIGHT (N1)

1

ARTHUR COCHRAN finishes a bottle of bourbon and listens to Fauré's *Requiem*. He holds a FUNERAL PROGRAM with BUTTERFLIES on it that says: "Jean Cochran, Beloved Wife."

ARTHUR

It's been a month, Jean, and I
don't know if I can go on without
you. You left me alone.

*
*
*

(shudders)

In Kentucky.

(drinks)

They do know their bourbon.

He opens a bottle of PILLS.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

If there's a reason for me to keep
living, you need to give me a sign.

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

CHOIR (O.S.)

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**Hallelujah, Halle-lujah!*

Arthur winces at the singing and pours pills into his hand.

ARTHUR

I'm not asking for much, just some
basic ghost stuff. Make the lights
flicker or possess a doll - just
don't show up in a white sheet,
that means something different in
the South.

(raising pills to mouth)

Last chance...

CHOIR (O.S.)

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

ARTHUR

(dropping pills)

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

2 EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER (N1) 2

Arthur stomps across the graveyard toward a run-down church.

CHOIR (O.S.)
*For the Lord God omnipotent
reigneth!*

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

3 INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (N1)3

ARTHUR
Stop! This is unacceptable.

The surprised choir reacts: GINNY (at the piano), WAYNE,
ADAMS, DWAYNE, REVEREND JAX, Glenn and Leanne. *

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(to Ginny)
Girl at the piano, you're sliding
up to each note which makes it out
of tune for half a second, ruining
the listening experience.
(to Dwayne)
Diet Din Viesel, sit up and stop
mumbling.
(to Reverend Jax)
Mister Rogers, is there a bug in
your ear?
(mimicking)
Then don't do this.
(to Adams)
Whitney Houston we have a problem.
It's your volume. Turn it down.
(to Wayne)
Snake Tattoo, George Frideric
Handel didn't know anyone named
"Hal," it's not "Hal-li-loo-yer"
it's "Hall-lay-loo-ya." Open
vowels. You heard of vowels,
they're those funny letters Pat
Sajak makes you pay for? Also--

Arthur PASSES OUT.

GINNY
Aw, dang. He didn't get to finish.

ADAMS

Hallelujah.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

4

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - THE NEXT DAY(D2) 4

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

REVEREND JAX

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

ADAMS

So? The internet also says I'm the richest woman in town because I murdered my husband.

(defensive)

Which isn't true. My extreme wealth is unrelated to Carl's mysterious disappearance.

WAYNE

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

GINNY

Wayne, that's very kind, but no amount of flattery is going to make me take you back.

(to group)

Everyone else, feel free to share your positive feedback. I cut four inches off my hair last week, it's starting to feel pretty aggressive that nobody's said anything.

Arthur opens his eyes.

ARTHUR

Is this hell? I guess I had that coming.

WAYNE

That was quite a bender you were on, Art.

ARTHUR

Arthur. How do you know my name?

DWAYNE

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

ARTHUR

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

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

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

I'm not supposed to be here.

ADAMS

Join the club. Ginny should be waiting tables at my restaurant, Dwayne should be milking goats, Reverend Jax should be writing a sermon and Wayne should be dead from snakebites.

WAYNE

(shows scars)

It's true. I've been bitten by rattlers four times.

ARTHUR

Great story. I'll take my pants and go.

He gathers the banner about him and stands.

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

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

ADAMS

(reads from phone)

"Arthur Cochran, the chair of
Princeton's music department -
known for throwing chairs - retired
following student complaints."
Sounds like you got fired.

ARTHUR

This is a generation of delicate
snowflakes. And terrible chair
duckers.

Unseen by Arthur, an 8-year-old boy, CASH, approaches with a
pair of pants. Ginny subtly shakes her head "no" at him.

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

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

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

CASH

Mama, you lied. In church.

GINNY

A lie is just the truth with a
little hat on it. Wait, that's a
terrible lesson.

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

GINNY (CONT'D)

See, now it's true, so it's like I
never lied.

(on a dime)

No, that's wrong, too. Don't
listen to Mama.

(quickly)

But honor thy mother and father.

5

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - LATER (D2)

5

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

ARTHUR

Everyone in a circle, step in. I
sing, you sing.

(sings)

Laaaaaaaaaaa.

CHOIR

Laaaaaaaaaaa.

ARTHUR

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

REVEREND JAX

Like Pinocchio, or as my father-
slash-homeroom-teacher called it,
Lying Child Gets What He Deserves.

GINNY

Reverend Jax was raised by
missionaries. His family watched
American movies, but they gave them
new titles to teach moral lessons.

WAYNE

He's seen every movie Tom Hanks
made.

REVEREND JAX

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

ARTHUR

It's good you're getting the word
out on that. Let's try a chord.

(cuing different people)

Ceeeeeee. Eeeeeeeee. Geeeeeee.

CHOIR

C/E/Geeeeeeeeeeee.

ARTHUR

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

Dwayne opens an eye and peeks at Ginny. Arthur notices.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

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

CHOIR

C/E/Geeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

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

WAYNE

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

GINNY

(to Arthur, showing arm)

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

ARTHUR

I don't believe in signs.
(noticing, through door)
Hey! That's my car! Don't tow that!

6 EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER (D2)

6

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

GINNY

You don't believe in signs? How about the one that says, "No parking, tow zone?"

ARTHUR

Yeah, I was hoping it wouldn't be my problem 'cause I'd be a rotten, fly-infested corpse.

A beat.

GINNY

Who's hungry? Someone's tummy needs a biscuit.

7 INT. MOONBOW DAIRY - LATER (D2)

7

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

ARTHUR

This is toast.

ADAMS

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

GINNY

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

ADAMS

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

GINNY

No one thinks you're a killer.
(to Arthur, whisper)
Everyone thinks that.

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

MAGNUS

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

ARTHUR

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

MAGNUS

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

ARTHUR

Uch.

MAGNUS

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

GINNY

Thank you, Pastor, but there's been enough change in our lives without switching churches and--

CRASH. The tower of silverware and creamers Cash has been building falls to the ground.

CASH

Son of a bee!

GINNY

Cash! Good job watching your language.

(to Arthur)

He got suspended for cussing out his teacher, so we're trying out new words to express frustration.

(to Cash)

I am so farming proud of you.

MAGNUS

The boy might benefit from going to a church where the communion wine isn't watered down by roof leaks. And we could use your beautiful singing voice in the choral competition.

GINNY

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

MAGNUS

You're the only person who's refused an invitation to our church. And I gotta admit -
(high voice)
It bugs me. If you change your mind, everyone is welcome at Church of Perpetual Praise.

ARTHUR

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

MAGNUS

I don't believe we've met, and I know every member of my flock.

ARTHUR

Yeah, I'm not in your flocking flock.

GINNY

(to Cash)

Flocking, that's a good one.

ARTHUR

My wife grew up here. She moved away, like anyone who wanted a better life or a cell signal. Her final wish was to be buried in the cemetery of her childhood church. But I was told there was no space.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I guess the billboard is big to
compensate for your tiny graveyard.

MAGNUS

You must be Mr. Cochran.

ARTHUR

Dr. Cochran.

GINNY

Dr. Cochran.

MAGNUS

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

ARTHUR

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

MAGNUS

I hope you find God. You think
it's hot in Kentucky...

Magnus leaves money on the counter and exits.

ARTHUR

(to Ginny)

That guy's choir always wins?

GINNY

Every year.

ARTHUR

Not this year. Your choir is going
to win. Because I'm going to help
you.

GINNY

I knew there was goodness in your
heart.

ARTHUR

I'm doing this out of spite.

GINNY

God works in mysterious ways.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

8

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - LATER (D2)

8

Arthur and Ginny face Wayne, Adams, Dwayne, Reverend Jax, Robby, Glenn and Leanne.

*

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

Temporary choir director.

GINNY

Dr. Arthur Cochran, professor of music at University of Princeton. I know, they never make the Final Four, but outside of basketball it's actually considered a good school.

ARTHUR

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

(re: Adams)

That's right, all the way next to "Making a Murderer."

ADAMS

Those allegations were not proven.

WAYNE

Yet.

REVEREND JAX

No body, no crime. That's what they say on the popular Dick Wolf procedural, "The Police Might Not Catch You, But God Surely Will."

*

ARTHUR

Debatable. Now, get your spine in alignment. Hey, Matthew McConaugh-snake, stop puffing out your chest to signal your wife that you're ready to mate.

GINNY

Ex-wife.

WAYNE

Papers ain't signed yet.

GINNY

(to Arthur)

Um, could I have a quick word?

9

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER (D2)

9

Ginny pulls Arthur inside.

GINNY

Wayne is the jealous type. He took a shot at a squirrel outside our window because he thought it was peepin' as I changed. So it'd be best if you stick to music and leave the relationship stuff out of it.

ARTHUR

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

Ginny straightens up, self-conscious.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

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

GINNY

It's pronounced "rabbit."

10

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - CHAPEL (D2)

10

MONTAGE as choir members sing individually for Arthur.

- Adams sings.

ADAMS

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound.

ARTHUR

The high notes are not for you.

- Glenn sings.

GLENN

That saved a wrench like me.

ARTHUR

"Wretch," not "wrench." Why would there be a song about saving a wrench?

- Wayne sings.

WAYNE

I once was lost--

ARTHUR

No chewing gum. Spit it out.

Arthur holds out a CUP, but Wayne defiantly SWALLOWS his gum.

WAYNE

(to Cash)

Never give up what's yours without a fight.

Cash nods, taking in this wisdom.

- Leanne sings, doing her own interpretive choreography.

LEANNE

But now, now, I am found!
(off his interruption)
I'm a choreographer.

ARTHUR

Cut that out.
(off her response)
I'm an atheist. Neither one of us is getting what we want here.

- Robby sings, adding in scales and arpeggios

ROBBY

'Twas bl-iiiiiiiiiiiiiiind,
but now I
seeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Do you see the music? That's not in the music.

- Ginny sings.

GINNY

'Twas blind, but now I see.
(no smile)
'Twas blind, but now I see.

ARTHUR

Don't smile, it reduces the
roundness of your sound. This is
church, it's no place for joy.

- Reverend Jax sings.

REVEREND JAX

(sings Pharell)

*Because I'm happy! Clap along if
you feel that happiness is the
truth.*

ARTHUR

I don't.

*

- Dwayne sings, continuing.

DWAYNE

(mumbles)

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the
sound...*

*

*

ARTHUR

Are you kidding me with this?

END MONTAGE.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That's as loud as you get? Listen
to your speaking voice – it's like
Mufasa in a Darth Vader costume.

GINNY

Don't be mean. Dwayne has a lot of
wonderful qualities Darth Vader
doesn't have.

ARTHUR

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

GINNY

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

CASH

No!

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

ARTHUR

Good God, man, you can't stop
staring. Basic human dignity. Ask
her out.

DWAYNE

I can't do that to Wayne. He's
always been like a big brother to
me. Gave me all his hand-me-downs
until I turned six and hit my
growth spurt.

ARTHUR

Look, if you can't speak up in real
life, that's your problem. But in
choir, I need to hear you. Now
imagine your voice is a tiny ball
of light in your chest. Don't
force it. Just let it expand.

(sings)

Meeeeeeee.

DWAYNE

(sings, small)

Meeee.

ARTHUR

Come on. Your voice won't be
denied, like your feelings for
Ginny.

DWAYNE

Meeee-----

ARTHUR

Let it fill your heart, then the
room, then let it reach all the way
to the woods.

DWAYNE

-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

ARTHUR

Yes! There's the sound. Poor
bastard, you don't like her, you
love her.

Arthur glances down at his wedding ring.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Nothing wrecks your life like love.

DWAYNE

(sings Miley Cyrus)

*You came in like a wrecking ball, I
never hit so hard in love.*

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

*All I wanted was to break your
walls--*

ARTHUR

Please stop. Now. I don't want to
hear that.

11

EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - LATER (D2)

11

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

ARTHUR

Okay, how about this for a sign:
I'll know there's a reason to go on
if locusts swarm that douchebag
from the mega-church.

Reverend Jax approaches.

REVEREND JAX

Technically, locusts are a plague,
not a sign.

(off Arthur's cold stare)

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

ARTHUR

It's a fun little ditty about a man
who lost his only family and has no
reason to live.

REVEREND JAX

Underneath the hostility, I sense a
cry for help. I'll just stand
over there in case you want to
talk.

Reverend Jax moves two steps away. Arthur relents.

ARTHUR

It's how we'd find each other in a
crowd. We'd whistle back and
forth. Family tradition.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

My parents used Bach's Toccata in G minor, but Jean said if she had to do something so ridiculous, at least it should be fun.

(re: music, mortified)

That's "Eye of the Tiger."

REVEREND JAX

Oh, from the Sylvester Stallone movie--

ARTHUR

I don't need to know what weird title your parents gave *Rocky*.

REVEREND JAX

It's *Rocky*. What else would it be?

12

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER (D2)

12

Ginny cooks as Cash does homework.

CASH

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

*
*
*

GINNY

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

*
*

CASH

You get free fries. That's the dream.

*
*
*

DWAYNE (O.S.)

Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour--

ANGLE ON the window, where a helium BALLOON in the shape of the letter "E" floats by.

GINNY

What is going on outside?

Ginny goes to the front door and opens it, revealing:

13

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (D2)

13

Dwayne stands in the yard. Behind him are GOATS, each with a balloon tied to its neck. The balloons spell "DATE ME."

DWAYNE

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

GINNY

Dwayne, what is this?

DWAYNE

Something I should have done ten
years ago. Ginny, will you go out
with me?

GINNY

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

DWAYNE

Ex-wife...

GINNY

Not until he signs the papers.

DWAYNE

But once the papers are signed?

GINNY

I don't know, it's complicated.

CASH (O.S.)

What's "Eat Me D"?

REVEAL Cash, watching the jumbled goats mill about.

GINNY

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

(realizing)

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

Cash exits. Ginny turns to Dwayne.

GINNY (CONT'D)

You need to forget this idea.

DWAYNE

I can't. Arthur was right. If I'm
not honest with my feelings, I
won't be honest with my music.

(digging in pocket)

Is now a good time to read a poem?

GINNY

Arthur put this in your head?

14 INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - LIVING ROOM - LATER (N2) 14

Arthur drinks bourbon. Suddenly, his boat begins ROCKING.

15 EXT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - A MOMENT LATER (N2) 15

Arthur comes out to find Ginny jumping on his deck.

ARTHUR

What are you doing?

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

He used his voice. Good for him.

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

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

GINNY

I'm not joking.

ARTHUR

Neither am I.

Ginny heads to her truck. As she goes:

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

How'd you know where I live?

GINNY

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

16 INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (D3) 16

Arthur stumbles in. In his fridge there's a lone bottle of
milk. He pours: nothing. Arthur groans.

17 INT. MOONBOW DAIRY - MORNING (D3) 17

Ginny is behind the counter. Arthur sits.

ARTHUR

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

GINNY

We're out.

ARTHUR

It's seven AM.

GINNY

Uh-huh. At three AM, the hunters
come in. At four, the fishermen,
five, the farmers, six, factory
workers, so by seven there's
nothing left for the layabouts.

ARTHUR

You're literally holding a biscuit.

Ginny stuffs it in her mouth defiantly as Pastor Magnus
approaches to pay his bill.

MAGNUS

Ginny, you've been in my prayers.
You deserve a choir equal to your
musical talent. It's not too late
to quit the Bad Noise Bears.

ARTHUR

Here's an idea: save your prayers
for your hairline.

MAGNUS

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

ARTHUR

So are you. Your hair. Did you
find a spot to bury it? I hear
that cemetery is hard to get into.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Unless your hair gave a lot of
money to the church.

MAGNUS

Jean always liked the self-
righteous blowhards.

ARTHUR

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

MAGNUS

She and I used to skip church and
play hide and seek in the cemetery.
That's where we had our first kiss.
But I'm sure she had other reasons
for wanting to be buried there.

Magnus crosses out. Arthur steams. A beat.

GINNY

(cheerful)

Who wants coffee?

ARTHUR

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

CHOIR (PRE-LAP)

King of Kings! Forever, and ever!

18

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - PRACTICE ROOM - LATER (D3)

18

CHOIR

*And Lord of Lords! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!*

Arthur conducts as Ginny, Wayne, Adams, Dwayne, Reverend Jax,
Robby, Glenn, Karla and Leanne sing. *

ARTHUR

Stop! Get your hips under it. *

It's Sunday morning, not Saturday
night.

(demonstrates)

Sunday morning, not Saturday night.
And Adams, you're in the wrong
section. You're an alto.

ADAMS

I am a soprano. I have never sung
alto.

ARTHUR

Yeah, well, things change as women get older.

ADAMS

(bleeped)

The fuck you say?

GINNY

Can I have a word?

Ginny pulls Arthur to the side.

GINNY (CONT'D)

This is important to Adams. I'll sing alto. No big deal.

*

ARTHUR

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

Ginny's phone RINGS.

GINNY

That's Cash's school, sorry.

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

ADAMS

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

REVEREND JAX

A pop song might be a better way to connect with the audience. Like John Cusack holding up the boombox in the rom-com classic, *If Girls Have Sex, Their Fathers Go to Jail*.

ARTHUR

No. "Hallelujah Chorus" is the way to win. Don't change horses midstream. I'm reduced to folksy metaphors since no one here respects authority or expertise.

*
*
*
*

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

Based on what I've seen, there is always a "situation" with Cash, so that's not a reason to leave.

GINNY

Excuse me?

ARTHUR

No, that's the point, I don't excuse you. On your own time, feel free to have any self-destructive delusions you want: your child is a font of untapped greatness.

(around the horn)

Lady Deathstrike is a nubile ingenue who definitely did not commit homicide. The movie butcher here is a great communicator. Dwayne and Wayne, it's cool that you want to bone the same lady.

WAYNE

What the hell? You want to bone my sweet Ginny?

DWAYNE

Consensual, sensual boning - once the divorce is finalized.

WAYNE

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

Wayne CHARGES at Dwayne, who catches him in a bear hug.

LEANNE/ROBBY/GLENN/KARLA

Take off your shirts! / Been waiting for this. / I can't watch. / Is it always like this?

*
*

REVEREND JAX/WAYNE/ADAMS/DWAYNE

Perhaps we should pray. / Fight me like a man! / And people say I'm the violent one. / These arms will never hurt you, brother.

Amidst the chaos, a hurt Ginny turns to Arthur.

GINNY

Dr. Cochran, you are no longer welcome here.

ARTHUR

At least you're finally being
honest.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

19

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - LIVING ROOM - LATER (D3)

19

Cash enters to hear a toilet FLUSH. Arthur sings as he washes his hands in the bathroom.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

*All the world is sad and weary,
everywhere I roam--*

(startles)

Gah!

*
*

Arthur reacts to Cash.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Don't you knock? What are you
doing here?

CASH

Hiding from Mom. She hates you, so
I figure she won't come here.

ARTHUR

Can't fault your logic.

Arthur emerges as Cash picks up a BUTTERFLY FIGURINE.

CASH

What's up with you and butterflies?

ARTHUR

My wife liked them, put it down.

CASH

My mom says you're like the Grinch.
You say you hate people, but really
you hate being alone.

ARTHUR

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

CASH

No, he had a dog. He was way
cooler than you.

ARTHUR

With such tact and social grace,
it's a shock you get into fights at
school.

CASH

Only during reading. Everyone laughs and calls me stupid. Then I punch them.

ARTHUR

Let's try a little experiment. I sing something, you sing it back.
(sings)
Dona Nobis Pacem.

CASH

Dona Nobis Pacem.

ARTHUR

Good. That's Latin for "don't stop by unannounced."
(re: sheet music)
These are the words. You follow along with your finger. Ready?

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

ARTHUR/CASH

Dona Nobis Pacem.

As they sing, Cash's finger zig-zags over the page.

ARTHUR

That's what I thought. Come on.

CASH

Where are we going?

ARTHUR

The Grinch has to go into Whoville.

20

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE - ENTRY - LATER (D3)

20

Ginny opens the door to find Arthur and Cash on the threshold. Ginny embraces Cash.

GINNY

Don't you ever run off like that, do you hear?
(to Arthur, cold)
Thank you for returning my son so I can continue being a terrible role model for him.

ARTHUR

So you do have sarcasm around here. Maybe next you'll have irony. Then Uber.

GINNY

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

CASH

I did that until first grade.

GINNY

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

This hits home with Arthur.

ARTHUR

You're right.

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

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

CASH

Like the goat balloons.

ARTHUR

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

(sighs, off blank stare)

Tom Cruise.

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

No. This isn't your fault.

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

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Okay, then. I'm going.

CASH

Stay for dinner.

ARTHUR

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

GINNY

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

ARTHUR

That's also what stalkers and
serial killers do.

GINNY

Just come in already.

Arthur does.

21 INT. GINNY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER (D3) 21

Arthur, Ginny and Cash sit at the table. Arthur finally gets
to eat a biscuit.

22 INT. FESTIVAL AUDITORIUM - STAGE WING - DAY (D4) 22

Onstage, PERPETUAL PRAISE CHOIR finishes "Amazing Grace."

PERPETUAL CHOIR

*Amazing Grace. How sweet the
sound, that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
'twas blind, but now I see.
Amazing Grace. It's a-mazing.
Amazing Grace. Don't you know,
we're amazing! This is a-mazing.
Amazing Grace.*

Wayne, Adams, Dwayne, Reverend Jax, Robby, Glenn and Karla
watch. *

ADAMS

We're toast.

Arthur, Ginny and Cash approach.

ARTHUR

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

ADAMS/REVEREND JAX/DWAYNE

Always something smart to say. /
Arthur, you bathed, what a fun
surprise. / I told you he'd show
up.

*

WAYNE

What's he doing here?

GINNY

We had a nice talk, and Arthur
apologized.

ADAMS

Did he give you diamonds? Because
it's not an apology without
diamonds. That's in the Bible.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Let's hear it for fifteen-time
defending champion, Perpetual
Praise Church!

In the background, Perpetual Praise Choir takes bows and leaves the stage.

GINNY

I think we should forgive him and
welcome him back.

WAYNE

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

GINNY

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

WAYNE

Should be more than that.

Dwayne perks up at the possibility of Ginny being free.

*

GINNY

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

(MORE)

GINNY (CONT'D)

(re: Arthur)

He's part of that. This crusty,
unpleasant man who's so difficult
he got rejected by a graveyard.
And lucky for us he did-

GINNY (CONT'D)

Because we take anyone, no matter
how low, how hated or despised--

REVEREND JAX

It's true. Amen.

ARTHUR

Okay, you've made your point.

(to choir)

My wife used to accuse me of liking
everything about choirs except that
they're full of people. I forgot,
in trying to improve your voices,
that they belong to actual humans.
I'm sorry. Life is short. Let's
use our time the way God intended:
to humiliate Pastor Magnus Filburn.

*

23

INT. FESTIVAL AUDITORIUM - STAGE - LATER (D4)

23

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

CHOIR

(sings)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

The crowd sits forward, amazed - this is actually good!

CHOIR (CONT'D)

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

GINNY

(to Arthur, sotto)

Brace yourself. We're rocking the
boat.

Arthur reacts as the choir launches into "Eye of the Tiger":

WAYNE

Rising up, back on the street.

DWAYNE

Did my time, took my chances.

ADAMS

*Went the distance, now I'm back on
my feet.*

REVEREND JAX/ADAMS

Just a man and his will to survive.

CHOIR

*It's the eye of the tiger, it's the
thrill of the fight, rising up to
the challenge of our rivals.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

Arthur gives in to conducting the surprise mash-up.

CHOIR (CONT'D)

*And the last known survivor stalks
his prey in the night. And he's
watching us all with the eye...*

CHOIR (CONT'D)

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelloo!*

GINNY

Of the tiger!

Cash peeks from behind the risers. Ginny gives him a nod.

ANGLE ON Cash who opens a box.

CHOIR

*Ha... Hallelu... Hallelu...
lelujah.*

WAYNE

It's the eye of the tiger!

REVEREND JAX

Reowwwr!

As the music reaches an exuberant climax, BUTTERFLIES burst into the air behind the choir. The crowd roars with delight.

ARTHUR

It's about damn time, Jean.

The choir waits as an EMCEE announces results.

REVEREND JAX

I knew you'd be back. I said,
let's surprise him with a mash-up,
like in the TV show about glee
clubs, "So Many People Are Gay."

*
*
*
*
*

EMCEE

Third place... McCreary Methodist.

DWAYNE

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

REVEREND JAX

You smell burnt toast.

WAYNE

Can't feel your wiener.

EMCEE

Second place, Pulaski Presbyterian.

ADAMS

(opening pill bottle)
Take an aspirin, just in case.
Wait, that's Mama's special pill.
Here's an aspirin.

ARTHUR

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

GINNY

You mean a miracle?

ARTHUR

More like a hallucination.

GINNY

God works in mysterious ways.

EMCEE

First place... Perpetual Praise
Church.

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

ARTHUR

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

EMCEE

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

GINNY/ADAMS/REVEREND JAX/WAYNE/DWAYNE

That's us! / Woooooo! / Amen! /
Yeah! / Suck on that, bitches!

Arthur is crushed in a mosh pit of hugs.

ARTHUR

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

END OF ACT THREE

TAG25:28 OMITTED

25:28

29 INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - BEDROOM - MORNING (D5)

29

A sleeping Arthur opens his eyes to find a SNAKE. A HAND pops into frame and scoops it up. REVEAL Wayne.

WAYNE

There you are!

(to Arthur, re: snake)

Snappy's a real escape artist. If I were you, I'd put a brick on top of her cage.

ARTHUR

What?

WAYNE

I'm not gonna give you a pet snake without providing a cage.

ARTHUR

What the hell is going on?

WAYNE

(calling off)

Get the coffee! Somebody's a grumpy-bear when he wakes up.

30 INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSEBOAT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

30

Arthur descends to find Ginny, Adams, Dwayne and Reverend Jax. There's a TERRARIUM for the snake.

GINNY

Surprise! Happy housewarming!

REVEREND JAX

Welcome to our church family. We brought a few things you might need - milk, eggs, a multi-pack of deodorant.

ARTHUR

I don't want--

Reverend Jax SPRAYS the deodorant on Arthur.

REVEREND JAX

Oops, it's used, can't return it now.

DWAYNE

How many eggs do you like - eight
or ten?

ARTHUR

That's not a number of eggs a human
eats.

ANGLE ON Adams going through Arthur's closet.

ADAMS

(re: blazer)

This is more like it. You wear
this and a wingtip shoe, we'll have
something to talk about.

ARTHUR

No. We won't. You can't just
barge in and mess with my--

*
*

Ginny pops a piece of BACON into his open mouth.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Oh, that's good.

GINNY

Stop fussing and sit.

*
*

Ginny steers Arthur onto the sofa. Wayne puts on a RECORD.
MUSIC CUE: "Consider Yourself (At Home)" from *Oliver!*

*
*

GINNY (CONT'D)

You don't want company, you picked
the wrong group to make friends
with.

*
*
*
*

REVEREND JAX

Yes, we are loving yet pushy, like
Mary Poppins in *Only A Father Can
Get Rid of a Visiting Witch.*

*
*
*

PULL BACK over the following:

*

DWAYNE

Who else wants eggs?

*
*

WAYNE

Speaking of eggs, anyone seen
Snappy?

*
*
*

ADAMS

(trying Arthur's scarf)

This is the wrong color for you.

(MORE)

*
*
*

ADAMS (CONT'D)

You should give it to someone who
pops in jewel tones.

*
*

ARTHUR

God help me.

*
*

As Arthur surrenders to the happy chaos swirling around
him...

*
*

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW