PERFECT HARMONY

“Hallelujah”

Written by
Lesley Wake Webster

Directed by
Jason Winer

BLUE REVISED DRAFT – March 15, 2019
**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................................Domnic Burgess
GLENN................................Gedde Watanabe
KARLA.................................Desi Dennis-Dylan
LEANNE.................................Shanice Williams
EMCEE................................Kiva Jump
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
FADE IN:

INT. ARTHUR’S CAR - NIGHT (N1)

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.
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?

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

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

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.

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

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)
Laaaaaaaaa.

CHOIR
Laaaaaaa.

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)

CHOIR
C/E/Geeeee.

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/Geeeee.

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!

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

INT. MOONBOW DAIRY - LATER (D2)
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
captured 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          GINNY
Dr. Cochran.     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

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


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

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?

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

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.”

INT. SECOND FIRST CHURCH - CHAPEL (D2)

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-iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiind, but now I see.
(seeeeeeeeeee)

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)
Meeeeeee.

DWAYNE
(sings, small)
Meeee.

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

DWAYNE
Meeeee-----

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

DWAYNE
-eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

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)
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?

INT. GINNY’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – LATER (D2)
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:

EXT. GINNY’S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER (D2)
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?

INT. ARTHUR’S HOUSEBOAT - LIVING ROOM - LATER (N2)
Arthur drinks bourbon. Suddenly, his boat begins ROCKING.

EXT. ARTHUR’S HOUSEBOAT - A MOMENT LATER (N2)
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.”

INT. ARTHUR’S HOUSEBOAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (D3)
Arthur stumbles in. In his fridge there’s a lone bottle of milk. He pours: nothing. Arthur groans.

INT. MOONBOW DAIRY - MORNING (D3)
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.


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)

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.
ARTHRUR
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--
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

INT. ARTHUR’S HOUSEBOAT – LIVING ROOM – LATER (D3)

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.

INT. GINNY’S HOUSE — ENTRY — LATER (D3)

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

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

INT. FESTIVAL AUDITORIUM - STAGE - LATER (D4)
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! Halleloo!

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.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SEATS - LATER (D4)

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
25:28 OMITTED

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