

# Pray Away Getaway

A Musical

Book, Words and Music by Jon Burr

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# Pray Away Get Away

The Musical

Book and music by Jon Burr

## Synopsis

“Sammy,” a post-pubescent boy, became smitten by Musical Theater following a trip to NYC with his parents, where they ended up seeing “Kinky Boots.” Back home in Dixville, Tennessee, Sammy is becoming aware he has growing feelings for men and boys, not like his platonic feelings for his best friends, who are mostly girls. His sense of guilt and dread grows as the feelings strengthen, realizing that homosexuality is not accepted in much of his rural small-town community, or his family’s church, or his peers. He hears his straight friends, parents and neighbors talking disparagingly about gay people, and is full of anxiety about his situation, which is becoming more painfully obvious to him with each passing day. Boys in school are starting to notice his mannerisms, and beginning to bully him.

His parents (Brent and Peggy) begin to suspect his situation - although he tries to conceal it, his mannerisms, mode of dress, and intense interest in Musical Theater lead them to suspect his situation, and they resolve to solve it by sending him away to a Conversion Therapy camp.

At first he tries to remain open, but his sense of alienation from the therapists is profound, and he feels completely un-seen and un-heard, as if he’s forced to deny his very being.

They confiscated his phone - or what they thought was his phone - but he kept a hidden spare “burner” phone for emergency use, and used it to text with his best friend Charlise.

At first he was willing to try to listen and see if there was some “cure,” not wanting to become alienated from his family and community - but the longer he stayed, the more urgently he wanted to escape. Scenes at the camp included shaming, emotional abuse, punishment, confinement, isolation, and psychological torture.

He meets fellow youngsters with the same orientation, and for the first time starts to feel like he’s not alone. The “residents” converse among each other, offering surreptitious support, along with a sense that there’s a larger world out there, and communities of kindred spirits. One new friend at the camp (Chloe) even knows somebody (Jason) who went to New York to get away, and had found a job and a place to live.

Meanwhile, the head of the camp (Reverend Crowe), a local minister and town selectman, is caught soliciting sex in a men’s room in a rest area of the interstate that passes through their county, arrested in the next town and held overnight in jail, to much scandal in the community. The chaos of the event affords Sammy enough cover to make his exit from the camp in possession of a few hundred dollars and a bus ticket given to him by Charlise when during her visit to the camp.

He escaped from the camp, hitchhiked to the bus station in the county center, and got on a bus to New York. He got in touch with Chloe’s friend Jason, who offered him a floor to crash on while he looked for a job. He finds a place in the gay community, getting a job in a gay bar/cabaret, starts reading BackStage, and is

soon making auditions. He finally gets a part, and sings the closing number to end the show.

## **The Cast**

- Sammy, 16, the lead and protagonist, a tenor and future star
- Brent, his father, a baritone, rural, uneducated, imposing
- Peggy, his mother, an alto, motherly with a kind aura
- Charlise, alto, Sammy's best friend
- Reverend Jackov - tenor, the family priest or minister
- Reverend Crowe, baritone, the camp director
- Jason, tenor, Sammy's New York benefactor, a bartender and aspiring actor
- Chloe, a camper friend
- Marcus and Ben, camper friends
- Assorted campers and barflies, diverse in all ways.

## **Opening Scene - Act 1**

*The curtain opens as Sammy and his folks are in a coffee shop near Time Square, NYC.*

Sammy: Wow, Kinky Boots was SO AWESOME. What a crazy way to save a business! Boots for drag shows! That Simon/Lola guy saved the factory... and those songs ! They were SO amazing...

Peggy: We were so lucky that the TKTS booth had seats! Everything else was sold out...

Brent (father): I wasn't too sure about seeing it, not crazy about anything "Kinky," if you ask me, but it turned out to be kind of interesting. It was a really weird twist, and really risky from a business point of view, getting involved in Drag shows.

That kid Charlie, first thing he does taking over the business, he goes waaay out on a limb, going against his dad's workers, AND his community, and his church/

Peggy: Brent, now, really, it just a play, and remember we're in NY, and this is Broadway, which is well known for ... for... "gayness"...? Loose behavior? "Alternative lifestyles?"

Sammy: Yeah, but the thing is... it was unconventional, a creative idea. It saved the business, and they ended up huge friends, and they totally got along...they ACCEPTED each other... but the thing that struck me the most was the songs, and just seeing the actors totally taken over by the characters, and just giving it up to the story, and the melodies, and the power of the words - I want to do that ! I want to be on the stage someday ! (*points finger in the air*) Music can change the world !

Peggy: well, Sammy, maybe someday - you certainly have the talent for it - you were so great in the talent show last year - but I'm worried about you getting sucked into a world you don't understand, where people are just **waiting** for youngsters like you to take advantage of...

Brent: bunch'a damn perverts if you ask me. Boots for Drag shows? Jesus - and I'm out \$275 for the tickets to watch the freaking thing...

*(intro starts as underscore)*

Peggy: Oh Brent, come ON! It's only a play - it's supposed to be art... and it's so good to see Sammy so interested in something at his age..

### **Song 01 Everybody Needs a Dream**

Peggy:

Everybody needs a dream,  
A spark to guide them through the night,  
A goal to chase, a star to reach,  
Like a beacon, shining bright.

Sammy:

I've got a dream, I see the stage,  
The lights, the crowd, the roar,  
I want to be on Broadway, Mom,  
I want to fly, to soar!

Peggy (*to Brent*):

And why not, Sammy's got the heart,  
and he's got the talent and the drive,  
To make it there, to feel the joy,  
To truly come alive.

Brent:

Dreams are nice, but let's be real,  
Not everyone can soar,  
Broadway's tough, it's hard to make it,  
You've got to mind the store...



Peggy:

But love, he needs to dream,  
To see the world beyond our door,  
To find his path, to spread his wings,  
To find the path he's searching for.

Brent:

Dreams just lead to danger!  
To paths we can't foresee,  
I just want to keep him safe,  
for him, for you, for me.

Sammy:

But Dad, this is my life, my choice,  
I need to take my chance,  
To find my place, to live my truth,  
To sing and to act and to dance...!

Brent:

No more of this! It's not for you,  
It's risky and it's wrong,  
You need to find a different path,  
One where you belong.

Peggy:

Love, just look, he needs to dream,  
To find out who he'll be,  
You can't control his every step,

You need to wait and see.

Brent:

Enough! This talk is done,  
Sammy, you'll obey,  
No more dreams of Broadway lights,  
*(shouting)* You'll live the normal way!

Sammy: But Dad...

Brent: No more, Sammy!

*The room falls into a tense silence, the dreams of the young boy clashing with the fears of his father. The tension hangs heavy in the air, unresolved and dark.*

*(fade to black)*

## **Scene 2 - Back home in Tennessee**

*Sammy and his girl pal Charlise are sipping sodas at a picnic table in the local square, watching people (offstage or upstage) walk by, making comments and showing reactions about them as they pass by.*

Charlise: I thought you were SO GOOD in "Our Town" -

Sammy: Thanks, but really it's no big deal. I feel like my whole life is an act, anyway - it's just more of the same...

Charlise: and the talent show last year... you can SING !

Sammy - Well, I/

*Then one guy in particular (Matt) walks by, and they both have a hunger reaction.*

Sammy: He's so...

Charlise: Sammy !! Look at you...

Sammy: What??

Charlise: Wow, you should see the way you looked at him!

Sammy: What? Whad I do...

Charlise: I can tell. You LIKE him. It's OK, I don't mind - but... ??

Sammy: it shows? You can tell...?

Charlise: we can talk. You can talk to me, Sammy, I know you for 4 evers. What the eff is going on ??

Sammy: I'm starting to feel stuff... and he - Matt - there's something about him...

Charlise: I agree totally... but I think I have a better chance than you do ! At least I think I do...

### **SONG 02 (Sammy): I'm Starting to Feel**

Verse 1:

There's a flutter in my chest,

A stirring deep inside,

A pull I can't ignore,

No matter how I try to hide.

When I see him walking by,  
There's a spark I can't conceal,  
My heart beats a little faster,  
I'm starting to feel.

Chorus:

I'm starting to feel,  
Something new, something real,  
It's confusing and it's strong,  
But it's where I belong.

I'm starting to feel,  
Something I can't deny,  
A truth within my soul,  
As he catches my eye...  
I'm starting to feel

Verse 2:

My Bud and I, we laugh and talk,  
There's no more secrets I keep,  
A longing I don't understand,  
A desire that runs so deep.

His smile, his eyes, they draw me in,  
It's a world that's so surreal,  
My thoughts are in a whirlwind,  
I'm starting to feel.

Chorus:

I'm starting to feel,  
Something new, something real,  
It's confusing and it's strong,  
But it's where I belong.

I'm starting to feel,  
Something I can't deny,  
A truth within my soul,  
As he catches my eye.  
I'm starting to feel

Verse 3:

I'm scared of what this means,  
Of the changes that it brings,  
But I can't ignore this feeling,  
It's a song my heart now sings.

I don't know where it's leading,  
Or how to make it real,  
But I know I can't ignore it,  
I'm starting to feel.

Chorus:

I'm starting to feel,  
Something new, something real,  
It's confusing and it's strong,

But it's where I belong.

I'm starting to feel,  
Something I can't deny,  
A truth within my soul,  
As he catches my eye...

I'm starting to feel

I'm starting to feel

I'm starting to feel

...Love!

*(applause)*

Charlise: This is serious, Sammy...

Sammy: I don't know what I'm going to do. I hear how they talk around here...

Being Gay is not OK. Didn't they beat up some kid across town? I saw it on the news...

*Lights to black.*

### **Scene 3 - The bullies**

*Setting: A quiet street on the outskirts of town. Sammy walks alone, lost in thought, when he notices a group of three redneck classmates standing ahead, blocking his path.*

Redneck 1: *(Spits on the ground)* Well, well, well. Look who's here...!

Redneck 2: *(Leering)* Looks like we got ourselves Sammy the faggot wandering around by himself.

Sammy: (*Tenses up, trying to stay calm*) Look, I don't want any trouble.

Redneck 3: (*Steps closer, menacingly*) Trouble? Oh, we ain't here for trouble. Just wanna teach you a lesson, queer boy.

Redneck 1: (*Moves closer, cracking his knuckles*) Ain't right for boys like you to be strutting around like you own the place.

Sammy: (*Backs away, heart racing*) Please, just leave me alone! I'm not bothering you !

Redneck 2: (*Laughs mockingly*) Oh, we ain't botherin' you, sweetheart. We're doin' God's work.

Redneck 3: (*Suddenly shoves Sammy, making him stumble*) You think you can just prance around, spreading your filth?

Sammy: (*Falls to the ground, fear and adrenaline surging*) Leave me alone!

Redneck 1: (*Kicks Sammy in the side*) You're disgusting. Shouldn't even be breathing our air.

Sammy: (*Curled into a ball, trying to shield himself*) Stop! Don't!

Redneck 2: (*Looms over Sammy, voice dripping with venom*) You're gonna learn, queer. Learn to keep your sick self hidden.

Redneck 3: (*Spits on Sammy*) Next time, it'll be worse. Consider this a warning.

*The rednecks laugh cruelly as they leave Sammy battered and bruised on the ground. Sammy struggles to catch his breath, pain radiating through his body.*

**Scene 4 - Busted!**

*Sammy's house at home. Peggy, his mom, is upset, frantic, even.*

*(underscore starts, creating tension and anxiety)*

*The local minister Rev. Jackov is there, along with Sammy's father Brent.*

Brent *(not even noticing Sammy's bruised face, torn clothes and limp)* Sammy, you're grounded...

Sammy: WHY??

Brent: I had your mother look at your laptop when you were in school. We've been really concerned, especially since we got back from NY... and it seems like our fears have been confirmed...*(growing more agitated)* You're a fucking faggot !

Mom: Brent ! SAMMY IS YOUR SON! Watch your mouth! Sammy ! How do you explain this? I found unbelievable smut in your browser history - men doing things... and shows, shows, and more shows... you're obsessed with Broadway now! And sex ! GAY sex! We don't want you falling into that world - especially if that's why you're so drawn to it ! We're asking Reverend Jackov for help with you !

**SONG 03 How Could You?**

Brent (Father):

What the fuck is wrong with you?!

How could you fall so low?

We raised you to be strong and true,



You're not the kid I know!

Minister:

You've let the darkness take your soul,  
You've turned from heaven's light,  
You've let the filth consume your heart,  
Now everything's a fight!

Brent:

How could you betray our trust,  
With such perverse desire?  
You've tainted all we've built for you,  
But now you're just a liar!

Minister:

The devil's grip is tight on you,  
You've let him lead your way,  
But we will pull you from this sin,  
If you repent today!

Chorus (Minister and Brent):

How could you? How could you?  
Fall into this shame?  
How could you? How could you?  
Play this twisted game?

Minister:

You spat on all our sacred vows,

You've thrown our hopes away,  
But we will drag you back to God,  
We'll make you kneel and pray!

Brent:

How could you, Sammy, taint our home,  
With secrets and with lies?  
You've stained our name, you've broken us,  
You've cut your family ties!

Minister:

We'll purge this evil from your heart,  
We'll cleanse you of your sin,  
You'll burn with guilt and shame until,  
You let the light back in!

Brent:

How could you degrade yourself,  
With vile and sinful lust?  
You've shattered all we've built with love,  
You've turned our dreams to dust!

Chorus (Minister and Brent):

How could you? How could you?  
Fall into this shame?  
How could you? How could you?  
Play this twisted game?

How could you? How could you?

Betray our love and trust?

How could you? How could you?

How could you? How could you?

How could you? How could you?

Your heart is ruled by lust!

*(hesitant stunned applause, if at all)*

*The room is filled with a charged silence as the song ends, with Sammy feeling the weight of their aggression and misunderstanding.*

*underscore continues, intro to the next song*

Rev. Jackov: It's not hopeless, Sammy... it's not too late. There are places that help you work through this - it's called "Conversion Therapy" - there's one over near Knoxville, I know the people... it's got therapy sessions, knowledgeable people, proven methods... nice grounds and activities, other people struggling with the same problem - you won't be alone. Remember, Sammy, this is only a choice, it doesn't have to be your destiny... you can get over this...

*(A small choir of flapper angels appears. flitting and hovering)*

## **SONG 04 They'll Fix You Right Up**

Rev. Jackov

Listen, boy,

don't feel so bad

We got a solution

gonna make you so glad

We got a place  
you go and stay  
there they'll help you  
Pray away the gay!

Angels:

There they'll help you  
Pray away the gay!

It's a camp with trees and stuff  
plenty of food, you'll get enough  
get to swim and climb some trees  
have some fun and do what you please  
Angels: (there they'll help you  
Pray away the gay!)

They'll fix you right up  
Pray away the gay -  
Exorcise your sin  
Gonna be a moral win!

They'll fix you right up  
pray until you're blue  
entirely fix what's wrong with you  
they'll fix you right up

Right or wrong,  
they know the way  
just get down on your

knees and pray

That's all that you have to do  
pretty soon you feel like new  
Angels: (there they'll help you  
Pray away the gay!)

They'll fix you right up  
Pray away the gay -  
Exorcise your sin  
Gonna be a moral win!

They'll fix you right up  
pray until you're blue  
entirely fix what's wrong with you  
they'll fix you right up  
they'll fix you right up  
they'll fix you right up  
they'll fix you right up!  
(*Angels scuttle away*)

Peggy: Sammy, it's for the best... we want you to have a chance at a normal life

Brent: You have no choice. You're going, like it or not.

*Blackout.*

### **Scene 5 - Charlise's back porch**

Sammy: You sure nobody's home?

Charlise: They're all out, mom took Evelyn to the mall. I told her I have a shitload of homework, which I do - but what's up? What has you so freaked?

Sammy: They're on to me. Mom got into my laptop and found stuff. They know. They know I'm fucking gay !!

### **SONG 05 They Know I'm Fucking Gay**

#### Verse

Judgment lingered heavy like a storm  
Home not a shelter more a battlefield  
Preacher's eyes burnt holes into my soul  
Words shattered walls around my heart unsealed

#### Verse 2

Family altar got no holy light  
Just accusation knives to cut my pride  
Scream at me like the devil's spawn  
Will these shackles break will I survive

#### Chorus

They know I'm fucking gay  
Momma's tears and daddy's rage  
Prayers twisted into chains  
No escape from this cage

#### Verse 3

Preacher man spouts twisted lore  
Sinful shadow darkened door

Truth out the open stark and bare  
I'm lost in this cruel glare

Bridge

Blood boiling veins of ice  
Can't take another second of their lies  
Heart heavy mind in turmoil  
Living caged doomed to recoil

Chorus

They know I'm fucking gay  
Momma's tears and daddy's rage  
Prayers twisted into chains  
No escape from this cage

They know I'm fucking gay  
They know I'm fucking gay  
They know I'm fucking gay  
They know I'm fucking gay  
*(applause)*

Charlise: Holy Shit!

Sammy: ... and they want to send me to this fucking “gay conversion” prison to  
“fix” me ! I am SO FUCKED !

*(underscore starts, building tension, agitated)*

Charlise: Holy Double Shit ! What are you gonna do?

Sammy: I gotta go... I dunno, Rev Jackov seems to think they have something, some way around it, so I don't have to deal with this "affliction" forever - maybe it's worth checking out - maybe I should try to keep an open mind about it. I mean really, I didn't choose this! I don't "want" to be gay - it's like it chose ME.

Charlise, hurriedly: They'll take your phone, I bet. You better get a burner phone and hide it! Just in case ! and put my number in it! You never know, they could be weirdos or a cult or something. I'll try to think of something. ...well, anyway, I've got your back no matter what - we'll find a way to get through this !

### **SONG 06 I've Got Your Back!**

Charlise:

Holy hell, this doesn't sound good at all  
Remember love that you can always call  
You're still you, no matter what they say  
That person, you, just happens to be gay

You're just learning who you really are  
The place they want to send you's not too far  
I'll always stand by you through thick and thin  
No matter how much trouble you're in

I've got your back  
No matter where, how far away  
Just text or call, I'll come that very day  
I've got your back, you know we're friends forever  
And I always want you to remember  
I've got your back.



Don't let their words tear your heart apart  
Just keep your head up high, stay true to your heart  
In a world so cold, I'll be your light  
You'll be O K, you'll make it through all right

When the storm is raging you feel alone  
Just know that you always have a home  
In me, you'll find the strength to carry on  
With you by my side, we can't go wrong

I've got your back  
No matter where, how far away  
Just text or call, I'll come that very day  
I've got your back, you know we're friends forever  
And I always want you to remember  
I've got your back  
I've got your back  
I've got your back  
I've got your back

Charlise finishes:

I'll always be here for you, Sammy!

(black)

## **Scene 6 - Intake at the Camp**

*Scene is a waiting room with a Reception counter, with a desktop computer and an annoyed-looking attendant, adjacent to an intake room (separated by a wall, end view to the audience)*

Funereal underscore - Attendant sings Sammy's name for call him in for intake.

Meeting with Director Rev. Crowe - *(a few condescending, inappropriate questions)*

Crowe: Well, you're a cute one. You're Sammy? *(Sammy nods)*

Welcome to Camp PrayAway - although I'm sure you're not happy to be here. No matter, this isn't supposed to be fun...it's never fun to face the truth. You need to get with the program ! You need to get with God's plan! Men, women, families, children - You know where children come from, don't you?

## **SONG 07 We'll Fix You Right Up**

*(sung by the director and camp faculty in a leering, ominous tone)*

Verse

Welcome fresh faces you lost little sheep  
Your souls need savin' down to the deep  
You crawled in broken we'll make you clean  
Bend to our will and don't make a scene

Verse 2

Your thoughts are twisted we set them straight  
Wipe off that smile embrace your fate  
We got the power to change your ways  
Trust in our vision for better days

#### Chorus

We'll fix you right up bring you up to par  
Erase who you are won't leave a scar  
From sinner to saint just follow the guide  
We'll mold you shape you from deep inside  
We'll fix you right up !

#### Verse 3

Our methods are proven beyond reproach  
Nothin' to fear when you're under our watch  
Kneel at our altar where faith begins  
Confess your errors we'll purge your sins

#### Verse 4

You say you're special just wait and see  
We'll strip your nonsense set yourself free  
Forget your past life embrace our light  
Say goodbye to darkness welcome the right  
welcome the right

#### Bridge

Whisper your secrets we'll make you new  
Don't fight the process we know what's true

Feeling resistance? Don't even start  
We got the answer to fix your heart

Chorus

We'll fix you right up bring you up to par  
Erase who you are won't leave a scar  
From sinner to saint just follow the guide  
We'll mold you shape you from deep inside  
We'll fix you right up ! (*leering, evil*)

Oh yeah

We'll fix you right up !

Oh oh

We'll fix you right up !

We'll fix you right up !

### **Scene 7 - Lecture hall**

*Camp members attending shaming lecture by Rev Crowe.*

Reverend Crowe:

"What you all need to understand is... you're making a choice! A bad choice, a misguided choice that goes against the very purpose of man and woman, the sacred division of the sexes. It's God's design, His law, that men and women come together to create life. It's His purpose, His divine order!"

*Crowe paces before the assembled camp members, his voice carrying both authority and fervor.*

"Your choice is a sin! It's all about sex, sex, sex, and the diseases that come with it. It's infidelity to your true purpose—to go forth and multiply, to raise families, to contribute to society. That's what God intended for each of you!"

*He fixes his gaze on Sammy, his tone accusatory.*

"Sammy, you've been led astray by these temptations. You think this desire is natural, but it's a deception, a twisting of God's plan for your life. Your struggle is not unique, but it is a challenge you must overcome. You must repent and turn away from this path of sin."

*He turns to another camper, pointing out with righteous indignation.*

"And you, Sarah, your longing for intimacy with another woman—it's a betrayal of God's commandments. You're denying yourself the chance to fulfill His purpose for your life."

*He sweeps his gaze across the room, encompassing everyone with his message.*

"We are here to help you see the error of your ways, to guide you back onto the path of righteousness. Through prayer, through therapy, through the cleansing fire of God's love, you can be redeemed. But it requires your submission, your willingness to change."

*Crowe pauses, letting his words sink in, the weight of his conviction palpable in the air.*

"Let us pray together now, for strength, for clarity, and for the courage to resist temptation. May God's grace shine upon each of you and lead you back to His embrace."

*With these final words, Reverend Crowe bows his head in prayer, the room filled with a solemn hush as the camp members absorb his impassioned sermon. Then he continues...*

### **SONG 08 Original Sin**

#### Verse

Look at you lost terrified broken  
Sins like chains heavy burden unspoken  
Darkness' grip made your hands soiled and stained  
Original sin in your soul ingrained

#### Verse 2

You thought it was love you're mistaken  
Deception with claws clandestine shaken  
Eyes blind hearts corrupt cold within  
Broken souls crave redemption for sin

#### Chorus

Crawl you down pray to be saved  
Confess on your knees pleading souls undressed  
Original sin can't escape nor hide  
Lost in shadows where demons reside  
You've been committing Original Sin!

## Verse 3

Salvation isn't free, it comes with a wage  
 tears falling down from deep inner rage  
 Indoctrination blade of truth's serration  
 Clothe ye in purity kill temptation

## Chorus

Crawl you down pray to be saved  
 Confess on your knees pleading souls undressed  
 Original sin can't escape nor hide  
 Lost in shadows where demons reside  
 You've been committing Original Sin!  
 Original Sin!  
 Original Sin!  
 You're here to let go of your sinful ways and sinful thoughts and urges, and to  
 understand that the consequence of resisting God's plan is eternal damnation, and  
 you're going to HELL!

**Scene 8 - Outdoors on the grounds**

*Fellowship during free time - Sammy finds he's not alone, and, hearing stories about friends of friends, and realizes that he's not "curable," nor is he isolated any more.*

*The sun casts a warm glow over the neatly manicured grounds of the conversion therapy camp. It's free time, and the campers are scattered around, some sitting in groups on benches, others walking quietly along the paths. Sammy, looking*

*nervous but determined, approaches a small group of campers seated on a bench under a large oak tree.*

Sammy: Hey, mind if I join you?

*The campers look up, some with guarded expressions, others more welcoming.*

*They exchange uncertain glances before one of them, Ben, nods slightly.*

Ben: Sure, take a seat.

*Sammy sits down cautiously, trying to gauge their reactions.*

Sammy: I'm Sammy.

Ben: I'm Ben. These are Marcus and Chloe.

Marcus: Hey.

Chloe: Hi.

Sammy: Nice to meet you guys. So... how... long have you been here?

Ben: This is my third month. Marcus just got here last week, and Chloe's been here the longest, almost three years.

Sammy: Three years? Wow. How do you... cope?

Chloe: *(sighs)* Some days are better than others. After I came, my folks split up.

My mom's broke and my dad's a drunk, and I got dumped here. But we try to stick together, you know? Support each other, be our own family...

Sammy: Yeah, I get it. It's just... hard. My parents, they think this will fix me. Like I'm broken or something.



Marcus: It's not you that's broken, Sammy. It's this place. (*gestures around*) They try to make us believe we're wrong, but we're not. We're just... different.

Ben: You're definitely not alone in feeling that way. I thought I was the only one until I got here.

Sammy: Do you ever wonder... if anyone actually changes?

Chloe: (*shakes head*) Not really. I've heard stories, though. About people who left here and found a life they never thought possible. In New York, San Francisco... even LA.

Sammy: Really? Like what kind of life?

Ben: Successful ones. Happy ones. Where they can finally be themselves without fear.

Marcus: Yeah, I heard about this guy who left last year. He's living in San Francisco now, openly gay and working as a designer. Said he's never been happier.

Chloe: And there was another guy, went to New York, became an actor. Said he felt more alive on stage than he ever did here.

Sammy: *softly* That sounds... amazing.

Ben: It is. And it gives us hope, you know? That maybe someday, we'll be the ones telling those stories...

Sammy: Yeah. Maybe someday.

Sammy, (*to Chloe*): Did you know him?

Chloe: He was still here a bit when I got here. I got his name and number - he was a friendly guy, named Jason, a really kind person. They took his cel, but I think he got his phone back somehow before he left. I'll get you his info at dinner

*Sammy looks around at the faces of his newfound companions, a glimmer of hope flickering in his eyes.*

Marcus: One thing that I know for sure about this place is that they don't care about us! They have no clue! about what it's like to be a kid who knows already that they're different. It's like they're trying to erase us, at the very core of ourselves. They think we're making a choice!

Chloe: It's not a choice at all. It's our nature

Sammy: It's core?

Marcus: Ask anybody here. In the meantime, it's our own business who we are and what we do, and besides that, it's freaking legal! Gay marriage is the law of the land! Why are we even here?

*The group sits in a moment of shared understanding, the distant sounds of the camp fading into the background as they find solace in each other's company.*

All Camp Members:

### **SONG 09 You Got To Be Who You Are**

Verse 1:

It makes no sense denying it

You can't pray it away

They don't recognize that

It's OK to be gay

Verse 2:

People's expectations

Projections of their fear

Try to redesign us

We tell them, they don't hear

Chorus:

Love is risky always

But we know which way to go

Got to find and follow your own star

You got to be who you are

Verse 3:

Their words are like a prison

Trying to lock us in

But our love is our freedom

In the end, love will win

Verse 4:

We rise above the hatred

With courage in our hearts

Together we'll make changes

This is where it starts

Bridge:

Through the storm and through the pain

We'll stand tall, we'll remain  
Every step we take, we claim  
Our right to love, we're not ashamed

Chorus:

Love is risky always  
But we know which way to go  
Got to find and follow your own star  
You got to be who you are

Chorus repeats:

Love is risky always  
But we know which way to go  
Got to find and follow your own star  
You got to be who you are

*(applause)*

### **Scene 9: Rebellion**

*The camp chapel, a modest building with wooden pews and a small altar, is empty except for Reverend Crowe, who stands near the front, organizing papers. Sammy bursts through the door, his face set with determination. Reverend Crowe looks up, surprised.*

Reverend Crowe: Sammy, what are you doing here? It's not time for evening prayers.

Sammy: I need to talk to you. Now!

*Reverend Crowe frowns, sensing the defiance in Sammy's tone.*

Reverend Crowe: Very well. What is it?

Sammy: This place... this camp... it's wrong. You don't understand. I didn't choose this! Do you think I would have chosen to put myself up to a lifetime of misery? Of stress? of rejection by the World? It's WHO I AM. You can't force me to deny my truth - to be something I'm not!

Reverend Crowe: (*sternly*) Sammy, you know we're only trying to help you. To save your soul from eternal damnation, to make you a normal member of society, a churchgo/

Sammy: Save my soul? By telling me I'm broken? By making me hate myself?

Reverend Crowe: (*raising his voice*) It's for your own good, Sammy! You need to repent, to turn away from this sinful path before you're lost forever! Think of your family!

Sammy: No! (*shouting*) I'm not the one who's wrong! You are! You're the one who can't see, who can't feel, who can't understand! You're the warden and this is a prison of fear !

Reverend Crowe: (*furious*) How dare you speak to me like that? You are damning yourself to hell! With every word!

Sammy: I don't believe that anymore. I won't live in fear. I won't let you - or anybody else! - control my life!

*Reverend Crowe takes a step closer, his face twisted with anger.*

Reverend Crowe: You ungrateful little bastard! You will burn in Hell for this defiance!

*Sammy takes a deep breath, his voice steady but full of emotion.*

Sammy: No. I won't. Because I know who I am, and I'm going to be proud of it.

*Sammy steps back, raises his head high, and begins to sing with all his heart, his voice ringing out powerfully in the chapel.*

### **SONG 10: Don't Tell Me Who I Am**

Sammy:

Sammy:

Don't tell me who I am!

Don't try to change my soul!

I'm not a puppet on your strings,

I won't play your role!

(Reverend Crowe watches in stunned silence as Sammy's voice fills the room.)

I know my heart, I know my truth,

I know myself inside,

I'll live my life, I'll love myself,

With everlasting pride!

I'm being abused, you're doing wrong,

You won't win with fear,

I'll stand my ground, I'll raise my voice,

And make my message clear!

You can't erase the love I feel,

You can't make me hide,  
I'll fight for who I truly am,  
It's you whose love has died!

Chorus:

Don't tell me who I am!  
Don't try to change my soul!  
I'm not a puppet on your strings,  
I refuse to play your role!

I know my heart, I know my truth,  
I know myself inside,  
I'll live my life, I'll love myself,  
With everlasting pride!

In the dark, I've found my light,  
In the hate, I've found my peace,  
No more chains to hold me down,  
I'm demanding my release!

I'll spread my wings, I'll soar so high,  
Above your walls of shame,  
For every soul who's felt alone,  
We'll rise above the blame!

Chorus:

Don't tell me who I am!  
Don't try to change my soul!

I'm not a puppet on your strings,  
I won't play your role!

I know my heart, I know my truth,  
I know myself inside,  
I'll live my life, I'll love myself,  
With everlasting pride!  
Don't tell me who I am!  
Don't tell me who I am!  
Don't tell me who I am!

*The final notes echo through the chapel, and Sammy stands defiantly, breathing heavily. Reverend Crowe is momentarily speechless, his face a mix of shock and rage.*

Reverend Crowe: *(seething)* You'll regret this, Sammy. Mark my words.

Sammy: *(calmly)* No. I won't.

*With one last defiant look, Sammy turns and walks out of the chapel, leaving Reverend Crowe standing alone, the echoes of his song lingering in the air.*

*Black.*

**Scene 10 - Isolated and in confinement - Sammy speaks out loud, to himself.**

*Sammy sits on the cold, damp floor of the chapel basement dungeon, a single dim light casting shadows on the walls. He wraps his arms around his knees, trying to*



*find comfort in the isolation. His voice trembles slightly as he begins to speak, but his resolve strengthens with each word.*

Sammy's Monologue:

How did it come to this? Locked away like a criminal, just because I want to be who I am. They think they're "saving" me...think they're saving all of us. But he doesn't see the pain, or the fear, or see the isolation he's causing. He thinks their way is the only way, that we're broken and need fixing. How can someone be so blind to the harm they're doing? He's SO blinded by his own self-righteousness and religious delusion.

*He pauses, taking a deep breath, his expression softening.*

But maybe... maybe it's not entirely his fault. Somehow he chose to fear what he doesn't understand, and to hate what he sees as different. He doesn't know tolerance. He's suffering from that same fear and ignorance. I can't help but feel wronged by him, and by everyone who thinks like him. But at the same time, I can't help but feel sorry for him. He's trapped in his own kind of dungeon, one of narrow-mindedness, fear, and hate...

*Sammy's voice grows more determined.*

I forgive him. I forgive all of them. Not because they deserve it, but because holding onto that anger only drags me down. I won't let their misunderstanding - and ignorance! - define me. I'll rise above it, even if they never see the truth. Because I know who I am, and that's enough. I have a right to be - and to be me.

*He leans back against the wall, closing his eyes as he begins to sing softly at first, then with growing strength.*

Sammy (singing):

### **SONG 11 How Could They Be So Wrong**

How could they be so wrong,  
about the way I love?

How could they not see,  
It's who I am, it's part of me?

They preach their words of hate,  
fear with all their might,  
But love is all I've known,  
And I know it's right.

Chorus:

How could they be so wrong,  
To think that I'm not free?  
How could they be so blind,  
To the truth that we all see?

I'll rise above their fears,  
I'll get away, be strong,  
I'll show them who I am,  
How could they be so wrong?

Their walls can't hold me in,

Their chains can't bind my heart,  
I'll find my way to light,  
Even when we're worlds apart.

Forgiveness in my soul,  
Strength in every tear,  
I'll walk my path with pride,  
Dispelling every fear.

Chorus:

How could they be so wrong,  
To think that I'm not free?  
How could they be so blind,  
To the truth that we all see?

I'll rise above their fears,  
I'll break away, be strong,  
I'll show them who I am,  
How they could be so wrong?  
...so wrong?

*Sammy's voice echoes in the confined space, a testament to his unyielding spirit  
and the power of forgiveness.*

**-Intermission-**

**-12 Entracte-**

## Act 2

### Scene 11 - Director's Arrest

*(Out on the grounds of the camp, campers clustered around, muttering excitedly)*

Camper 1: Did you hear the news? it was on local TV this morning, then CNN picked it up... Crowe was arrested!

Camper 2: For WHAT?!

Camper 1: Solicitation of a minor! At the rest area by exit 42 out on the Interstate!

Camper 4: A minor WHAT?

Camper 5: It was a young boy, 11.

Camper 6: Fuck, Crowe is one of us?! ..Except a freaking pedophile perv!

Camper 3: He's a freaking pedophile! He's going to JAIL! A sex offender, of all things...

Camper 4: and all this time, shaming us! At least we're not ILLEGAL !

Camper 5: What do you think is gonna happen next? Is Cockworthy going to take over the camp?

Camper 6: I bet, he's the #2 here. They're making too much money off us to shut it down.

Sammy: Wow, it's going to be chaos around here... !

*(Sammy appears to be thinking to himself, dawning with new hope and a plan)*

Camper 4: And shaming us this whole time, and preaching all this religious nonsense....

*The song starts, with the campers making a circle, singing as they walk around, then break into movement patterns, choreographed, with mocking body language and false bravado*

### **SONG 13 That's What They Call Hypocrisy**

Rapper (street vibe)

That's what they call hypocrisy

Rules for you but not for me

But when the truth comes out we see

That's what they call hypocrisy

He tried to tell us how to live

compassion wasn't his to give

now he's busted, serves him right

got to face his legal plight

Tried to tell us we were wrong

stringing everyone along

Now we know, the truth is out

the real sinner's been found out.

All Campers: (tight rhythm but rapper still rapping)

That's what they call hypocrisy

Rules for you but not for me

When the truth comes out we see

That's what they call hypocrisy

Rapper: (or ensemble rap)

When they cart him off to jail  
we all hope this place will fail  
but they make too much off our distress  
They'll make someone clean up his mess

Cockworthy waiting in the wings  
shares the same view on these things  
Wants to keep us stuck in here  
Listening to their hate and fear.

That's what they call hypocrisy  
Rules for you but not for me  
When the truth comes out we see  
That's what they call hypocrisy

That's what they call hypocrisy  
Rules for you but not for me  
When the truth comes out we see  
That's what they call hypocrisy  
Hypocrisy!

*(applause)*

Sammy: Maybe this is my chance... time to break out the burner phone and make  
some calls...thank you, Charlise ...!

*A P.A. announcement is heard - "All campers report to the dining room !"*

*(black)*

**Scene 12 - Visitor's Day**

*Setting: A visiting area within the camp, separated by a partition with Charlise and Sammy on opposite sides. They speak through a wire mesh, under the watchful eye of camp staff.*

Sammy: Thank God you made it! your timing is so excellent... did you hear what's happening in here?

Charlise: Yes !Oh, my GOD! Crowe got busted! What a freaking ironic twist of fate.

*(Eyes brimming with concern)* Sammy, I can't believe what's happened. Freaking "Reverend" Crowe?... it's just... *(she shakes her head, struggling to find words)*

Sammy: *(Nods solemnly)* Yeah. It's a mess. But it's also... I don't know, Charlise, it's like waking up from a nightmare. *(He looks around, voice dropping to a whisper)* I can't stay here anymore. I've had an... an epiphany, I guess... I know who I am now. It's OK, it's me! - and I have a line on something - you know the burner phone you gave me - ?

Charlise: yeah....?

Sammy: I got the number of a guy, Jason - he used to be here a couple of years ago. He's in NY! He has an apartment, and is working as a bartender - I've been talking to him. He's a theater nut, too - making auditions and stuff - and he says I can crash with him if I ever get to NY!

Charlise: (*Voice urgent, but hushed*) That's exactly why I'm here. (*She reaches into her bag, pulling out an envelope*) I've got \$200 and a bus ticket to New York. You can start fresh there, Sammy. It's time to dream again...

Sammy: (*Eyes widening in surprise*) Charlise, I feel bad taking this from you....

Charlise: (*Insistent*) Sammy, you're not safe here. Take it ! This place... it's not right, it's like a prison or a concentration camp or something, and you gotta get the F outta here ! (*She presses the envelope through the mesh*) Take it. Please.

Sammy: (*Gazes at Charlise, gratitude and determination flickering in his eyes*) Thank you. I'll pay you back, I promise.

Charlise: (*Smiles softly*) You don't owe me anything. Just promise me you'll find your way, Sammy. BE who you really are.

Sammy: (*Nods, voice firm*) I will. I'm not running anymore, not complying, and not listening to a load of shit. (*He clutches the envelope and tucks it out of sight*)

Charlise: (*Eyes misting*) I believe in you, Sammy. We all do.

Sammy: (*Touches the mesh separating them*) I'm going to miss you, Charlise - you're the best friend EVER...

Charlise: (*Voice catching*) I'll miss you too. But this isn't goodbye forever. (*She glances around nervously*) You better get going before dawn, before they notice... hang out at the bus station for a little while...

Sammy: (*Nods, a small smile breaking through*) I will. Thank you, Charlise. For everything.



Charlise: (*Blinks back tears, trying to smile bravely*) Go, Sammy. Go be who you were meant to be.

### **SONG 14 I've Got Your Back! (reprise)**

Charlise:

I've got your back  
I'm glad I'm here with you today  
I got your call, I did just what you say  
I've got your back, you know we're friends forever  
And I always want you to remember  
I've got your back.

You can find a way that you can live  
Just try not to hate, find a way to forgive  
In a world so cold, I'll be your light  
You'll be O K, you'll make it through all right

When the storm is raging you're not alone  
Just know that you always have a home  
Together we'll find the strength to carry on  
Go and find your way, you won't go wrong

I've got your back  
No matter where, how far away  
Just text or call, I'll come that very day  
I've got your back, you know we're friends forever  
And I always want you to remember  
I've got your back

I've got your back

*Sammy holds onto the envelope tightly, his resolve strengthened by Charlise's support. With one last look at his friend, he turns and heads back to his room to wait to leave. The lights go dark, and we see him exit the room with a bag.*

### **Scene 13 - The Longest Wait**

*On a bench outside the bus station, before dawn, one streetlight lit, Sammy sits on the dark end of the bench, his bag on the sidewalk beside him, singing to himself, trying to calm his beating heart.*

### **Song 15 The Longest Wait**

I wonder if they noticed  
I wonder if they're coming  
I bet they hear my beating heart  
from here up to Wyoming

A second takes forever  
I'm breaking out in sweat  
I hope they didn't find me gone  
and they don't miss me yet

I'm breaking away  
it's been the longest wait  
Wait to find my future,  
wait to learn my fate

I'm breaking away  
I'll start my life's adventure  
no more shame and censure  
It's been the longest wait!

The seconds measure my heartbeat  
the yearning in my chest  
my quiet desperation  
starting on my quest.

I hope the bus is coming  
I need to get some rest  
when I get up on it  
there goes my distress

I'm getting away  
I'll grab the reins of fate  
finally making my move  
I won't hesitate

I'm getting away  
see where fortune takes me  
I won't hesitate  
It's been the longest wait  
(vamp)

*Sammy hears a car approach, and he hunches down, pulling his coat over his head. Suspenseful shark music underscore - then the car passes by, offstage*

Sammy: Holy freaking Jesus, I thought it was them..!

*(takes a minute to collect himself, as the stage lights start to brighten gradually with sunrise tones on the backdrop. We wait a bit with Sammy, in silence, then he stands up as if to look down the road for the bus)*

It's been the longest wait

Soon the bus will come

Won't be long, it looks like dawn -

my wait is nearly done.

(vamp)

*Looks down the road again, looks up like he saw something, gives an involuntary "thumbs up"*

It's been the longest wait

*(We hear the sound of a bus pulling up, and then "boarding for New York" over the intercom from the wing. Sammy picks up his bag and exits toward the sound)*

#### **Scene 14 - Jason's NY Apartment**

*The evening, after the bus arrives in NY, and Sammy finds his way to Jason's studio apartment in a walkup in Hell's Kitchen, West 40's*

Sammy: I'm so grateful to you, Jason! Thanks SO much for taking me in! Let me do the dishes!

Jason: Thanks ! That's nice of you - you have the earmarks of a tolerable roommate! I hope the Futon isn't gonna kill your back. I'll take the loft bed... tomorrow you can come by the bar, and I'll introduce you around a bit. You'll feel

at home in no time... we help each other here, despite what you may have heard about New York.

Sammy: that's so incredibly generous of you, Jason

Jason: Call me "J" -

### **SONG 16 Welcome to New York**

Jason:

Verse

Welcome to the city with lights that are famously bright,  
Where daring to dream - it just feels right.  
You're part of a family, a circle of friends,  
In a world where hope on kindness depends.

A

Welcome to New York  
you'll learn success is hard work, it's something you earn  
You are not alone,  
you're part of our community, Rainbow people's unity?  
Welcome to New York.

A1

We've all been like you,  
brand new in town, you're feeling upside down  
Now you're here to stay  
feeling lucky that you got away.

Bridge

Don't be scared, love, everything is new  
but you've got people who want to help you  
hang on for the ride and remember your pride  
pay attention, listen, you'll find out what to do

A

Welcome to New York  
You're better off here, set aside your fear  
Soon you'll feel at home  
You're part of a community, blending in humanity  
Welcome to New York !  
Welcome to New York!  
Welcome to New York.

*(instrumental, dance, Jason invites Sammy into a 2-man chorus line)*

Bridge

Don't be scared, love, everything is new  
but you've got people who want to help you  
hang on for the ride and remember your pride  
pay attention, listen, you'll find out what to do

A

Welcome to New York  
Where the key to existence is plenty of persistence  
You are not alone,  
You're part of our community, Rainbow people's unity?  
Welcome to New York!

New York!

*(applause)*

Sammy: Thank you so so much J! I'm as inspired as I am tired..

*Jason looks affectionately at Sammy, and touching his face, hesitantly and gently, gives him a kiss on the cheek.*

Jason: G'nite, sweetie

Sammy: Nite, J! Thank you...!

*(black)*

**Scene 15: Inside a bustling New York bar, late evening.**

*Jason is behind the bar, shaking up a Martini. Sammy is seated at the bar along with several chorus boys soaking in the lively atmosphere*

Jason: *(Pouring a drink)* So, Sammy, let me introduce you to some of the best guys you'll meet in this city. This here is Danny, Mark, and Ricky. All chorus boys like you wanna be, hustling for their next gig...

Danny: *(Raising his glass)* Welcome to New York, Sammy!

Sammy: *(Smiling, a bit overwhelmed)* Thanks, guys. It's great to meet you all.

Mark: So, Sammy, what brings you to the city?

Sammy: *(Taking a sip of his drink)* I needed a fresh start. To be honest, I just escaped from a wacko religious camp and took a bus. I love the theater, and always dreamed of being on Broadway, and figured there's no better place to be than here.

Ricky: *(Nodding)* You're in the right place. It's a tough grind, but it's worth it. Have you checked out Backstage yet?

Sammy: Not yet. What's that?

Jason: *(Leaning in)* Backstage is your new bible, Sammy. It's where you'll find all the listings for auditions, gigs, and theater work.

Danny: Yeah, you can find everything there—from Broadway auditions to off-off-Broadway productions. It's how we all got started and still read it every day..

Mark: And it's not just about the big shows. There are plenty of opportunities in smaller productions that can really help you build your resume, and get an Equity card to do Union work..

Ricky: *(Grinning)* And don't forget the networking. It's all about who you know in this town - and you meet them at auditions and stuff, and places like this..

Sammy: *(Nodding, taking mental notes)* I'm so grateful that you're sharing this with me. So, how do you guys usually prepare for auditions? What's that like?

Jason: *(Smiling)* Everyone has their own routine. For me, it's all about getting into the right headspace. But the most important thing is to be prepared. Know your monologues, have your songs ready, and always be ready to dance.



Danny: (*Laughing*) And be ready for rejection. It's part of the game, but you just look at it as part of the work, and never take it personally. Just keep moving forward. And never compare yourself to anybody - you got to be yourself.

Mark: Yeah, you might not get anything right away, but each audition is a chance to show casting directors what you can do. They'll remember you if you bring something to the work - come up with a point of view, and use your imagination. I love the story about Marlon Brando and the marbles in his mouth for his audition for the Godfather... really creative...

Ricky: (*Patting Sammy on the back*) Just keep your head up and stay positive. We've all been there. You will hit something eventually. Meanwhile take some classes! Check out the Actors' studio. See if you can find a voice coach/ accompanist. Take some dance classes...

Jason's Boss: (*Walking over*) Hey, Jason, who's your new friend?

Jason: (*Gesturing to Sammy*) This is Sammy, just got into town, looking to break into the theater scene. He's crashing with me until he gets his feet under him...

Jason's Boss: (*Smiling*) Welcome, Sammy. How are you settling in?

Sammy: (*Smiling back*) It's a bit overwhelming, but everyone's been really kind and helpful so far (*looking at Jason with gratitude*).

Jason's Boss: (*Nods*) That's good to hear. Listen, we're always looking for reliable help around here. How about you start as a busboy and prep chef? It's not glamorous, but it's steady work, it's after audition hours, and you'll get to meet a lot of people coming through here.

Sammy: *(Surprised and grateful)* That would be amazing! Thank you so much.

Jason's Boss: *(Smiling)* Great. *(reaches out for a handshake)* We'll get you started tomorrow. Welcome to the team !

Sammy: *(Turning to Jason and the others)* This is incredible. Thanks, everyone, for making me feel so welcome. You guys are the best !

Jason: *(Clinking glasses with Sammy)* To new beginnings and chasing dreams. Welcome to New York, Sammy. *(underscore reprises melody of the song)*

All: *(Raising their glasses)* Cheers!

*Sammy gets off his stool, the others continue smiling and chatting (silently) while Sammy separates and comes to the front of the stage, and starts to sing. The others pay him no attention at first. The lights focus on Sammy as the background dims*

### **SONG 17 It's All About The Work**

Sammy

This is so amazing, how helpful everyone is  
 I could not imagine such people could exist  
 I'm so very grateful to hear what they all say  
 sounds like it's a lot of work, they do it every day

No one mentions stardom, or my dreams coming true  
 It's all about the work they say, and that's just what they do  
 Learn to take rejection, push forward anyway  
 and you don't know if or when you'll catch a break someday  
 It's all about the work.

Is this what I wanted? It takes a lot of drive  
I know when I'm singing, I feel the most alive

I can do the work, I just know I can  
there isn't any shortcut to being a leading man  
I know I've got so much to learn, but I'm here to stay  
hang in there and do the work, and it'll be O K!

*(vamp)*

*Chorus enters, and adds*

It's all about the work.

Go to classes, make auditions, got to pay the rent.  
then you got your real job and you're completely spent.  
Then one day you hit your mark, it feels heaven sent  
all the work is paying off one hundred ten per cent.

Sammy

I'm so very grateful to every one of you  
thank you for your good advice on how to follow through

*Chorus (all others)*

Kid we got our eye on you, we hope you get a break  
keep on trying, do your best with every step you take

It's all about the work.

*Chorus (all others)*

This is what he wanted - yes, he has the drive  
Listen when he's singing, he really comes alive

He can do the work,

Sammy

yes I know I can

there isn't any shortcut to being a leading man

Chorus

He knows he's got so much to learn, but now he has a plan

Sammy

I know I can do it.

Chorus

He knows he can do it.

All sing

It's All About the Work!

*(applause)*

*The scene winds down with the chorus boys and Sammy returning to the bar, resuming their conversation as the light goes dark.*

## **Scene 16 - Auditions, Classes, Work, and a Callback**

*The stage is set into 3 "rooms" - "set 1," a rehearsal studio with a casting table and 3 people, "set 2," a theater workshop set with a small stage and a few class members on stools, and "set 3," a small restaurant kitchen. Sammy hurries from one to the other, making auditions, taking classes, and making salads and plating desserts*

Set 1: Rehearsal Studio

Casting Director 1: (*Looking at Sammy's resume*) Alright, Sammy, whenever you're ready.

Sammy: (*Nods, takes a deep breath, and begins his monologue*) From "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder, as the Stage Manager: "We all know that something is eternal. And it ain't houses and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even the stars . . ."

Casting Director 2: (*Whispering to the third person, as Sammy freeze-frames momentarily*) He's got a good presence.

Casting Director 3: (*Nodding*) Let's see how he finishes.

Sammy: (*Finishes with emotion*) "...everybody knows in their bones that something is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings.""

Casting Director 1: Thank you, Sammy. We'll be in touch.

Sammy: (*Smiling, nods*) Thank you! (*Quickly exits the studio*)

Set 2: Theater Workshop

Instructor: (*To the class*) Alright everyone, remember, projection and emotion are key. Sammy, why don't you start us off with your piece?

Sammy: (*Nods, steps onto the small stage, and begins*) "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

Classmate 1: (*Whispering to another classmate*) He's good. Really good.

Classmate 2: (*Nods*) You can tell he's reaching for it...

Instructor: (*Interrupts*) Good, Sammy. Now, try to connect more with your gut on this... try and feel the words.

Sammy: (*Takes a moment, then starts again with more intensity*) “When I was a child, I spoke as a child...”

Instructor: (*Nods approvingly*) Much better. Alright, next up!

Sammy: (*Smiling, quickly exits the workshop and heads to the kitchen*)

Set: Restaurant Kitchen

Jason's Boss: (*Handing Sammy a plate*) Sammy, we need this salad for table five, and those desserts plated for table seven.

Sammy: (*Nods, quickly assembling the salad*) Got it.

Chef: (*Watching Sammy*) You're quick, kid, but remember! - presentation is key. Make it look as good as it tastes.

Sammy: (*Carefully plating the desserts*) Yessir, Chef Carlito!. (*Places the plates on the counter*)

Waiter: (*Grabbing the plates*) Thanks, Sammy. (*Rushes out*)

Jason's Boss: (*To Sammy*) You're doing great, kid. Keep it up.

Sammy: (*Smiling*) Thanks, boss. (*His phone buzzes, he glances at it and his face lights up*) I got a callback!

Chef: (*Smiling broadly*) Congrats! When is it?

Sammy: (*Reading the text*) Tomorrow afternoon.

Jason's Boss: *(Patting Sammy on the back)* You'll do great. Just keep that energy up !

Sammy: *(Excitedly)* Thanks! I will.

Scene: Transition between Locations

*Underscore starts, upbeat, busy and a bit chaotic with some occasional clashing notes and oddball percussion*

*Sammy is seen moving seamlessly and silently between the rehearsal studio, theater workshop, and kitchen, showcasing his dedication and hustle, as the actors in each location animate but in silence. The lighting and sound shifts to indicate the different locations and the pace of his life as the underscore continues.*

Final Set: stopping in the Restaurant Kitchen

Jason's Boss: *(Handing Sammy another plate)* Keep up the good work, Sammy. Remember, it's all about balance.

Sammy: *(Nods, quickly assembling another dish)* Yes, Boss.

Chef Carlito: *(Nodding approvingly)* You're getting faster. Keep it up.

Sammy: *(Smiling, his phone buzzes again, he checks it, and shows an intense surprise reaction and muted ecstasy)* It's from the casting director ! They want me to read for the writer and producers!

Jason's Boss: *(Grinning)* That's fantastic news! You're on your way, kid.

Sammy: *(Excitedly)* Thanks! Keeping my fingers crossed...!

Chef Carlito: *(Smiling)* You gonna get it. Go get 'em, Sammy.

*The lights go black with Sammy beaming, filled with hope and determination*

**Scene 17 - Dressing Room - The show, opening night, all friends and family with good wishes**

*Setting: Sammy's dressing room on opening night. The room is filled with excitement as his friends and family gather to wish him well. There's a palpable buzz of anticipation and pride.*

Charlise: *(Hugging Sammy)* I can't believe this day is finally here! You're going to be amazing out there!

Jason: *(Grinning)* From busboy to Broadway star, huh? I always knew you had it in you.

Sammy: *(Laughing)* Thanks, Jason. I couldn't have done it without your...*(tearing up, looking down)*

Jason's Boss: *(Patting Sammy on the back)* You've earned this, kid. All those late nights in the kitchen were worth it.

Carlito: *(Holding up a small gift)* For luck, Sammy. It's a little something from all of us.

Sammy: *(Opening the gift, smiling)* Thank you so much, everyone. This means SO MUCH to me...



Chloe: (*Handing Sammy a bouquet of flowers*) Break a leg out there, Sammy. You're going to steal the show.

Peggy: (*Tearing up*) I'm so proud of you, sweetheart. You've worked so hard for this.

Brent: (*Looking emotional*) Sammy, I...

Charlise: (*Interrupting*) Alright, everyone, group hug before Sammy goes on!

*They all gather for a big group hug, laughter and excitement filling the room.*

Sammy: (*Grinning*) Thank you, everyone. I love you all so much.

*The room quiets as Brent steps forward, looking nervous but determined.*

Brent: Sammy, can I have a moment alone with you?

Sammy: (*Nods, the others begin to file out, eyes widening and looking at each other, leaving Brent and Sammy alone*) Sure, Dad. What's up?

Brent: (*Takes a deep breath*) Sammy, I need to say something. I've been wrong about a lot of things. I've been wrong about you. (*Pauses*) I should have believed in you from the start. I let my fears and prejudices cloud my judgment, and I'm deeply sorry for that, and I thought I may have lost you forever. I see now how strong and brave you are. You've taught me more than I ever taught you.

*Brent begins to sing, his voice filled with emotion.*

### **Song 18 I Should Have Believed in You**

Brent

I should have believed in you, from the very start,

Instead of my suspicion, instead of breaking your heart.  
I see now the courage in your eyes,  
How you've risen above it all, and how you've touched the skies.

I held onto ignorant fear, I let it rule me so long,  
But seeing you now, I'm so so sorry  
I know I was so wrong.  
I never really saw you before, but now you've opened my eyes,  
I should have believed in you, instead of believing in lies.

I should have believed in you, seen the light in your soul,  
I should have let you fly, and helped you reach your goal.  
For now I understand, it's your dreams that make you true,  
I should have believed in you  
I should have believed in you.

*(applause)*

*The song ends with Brent and Sammy sharing a heartfelt hug, tears in their eyes.*

*The door opens and everyone re-enters, the mood both somber and hopeful.*

*Offstage intercom: "Places Please!"*

*Peggy: (Wiping her eyes) It's time, Sammy.*

*Charlise: (Beaming, looking back and forth from Brent to Sammy) I'm SO happy for you! Go out there and show them what you've got!*

*Sammy: (Taking a deep breath, filled with determination) Thank you all. Here I go.*

*The scene ends with Sammy stepping out of the dressing room, ready to take the stage, surrounded by the love and support of his friends and family.*

*Light goes to black, then long musical interlude-intro as the stage as reset*

### **Scene 18 - Closing Number**

*The set reverts to some convenient earlier set - maybe the campground. Sammy starts the song alone, but is joined by the chorus boys, and eventually the entire cast*

### **SONG 19 I Knew I Could Do It**

#### Intro

It's hard to believe I'm standing here  
despite the struggles, despite the fear  
This has always been my dream  
my aspiration, my hope supreme

#### Verse 1

And I know I'm not alone  
I've made some friends, found a new home  
Found a sense of unity  
And a new community

#### Verse 2

I'm not ashamed of who I am  
nor afraid of being damned  
First I had to get away

from good old Camp Prayaway

Chorus (Sammy)

I knew I could do it  
Do the work it takes  
forgive my own mistakes  
try to earn my breaks

I knew I could do it  
stay and follow through  
learning from what others do  
I knew I could do it!  
*(cast begins to gather)*

Verse 3

I'm so grateful for the chance  
it's not all glamor and romance  
I got some help along the way  
friends who all are here today

Chorus *(cast)*

No more hiding who we are  
Proud to shine, each one a star  
Staying hopeful every day  
And we're really proud to say

Chorus *(cast)*

We knew we could do it  
Do the work it takes  
Forgive our own mistakes

Try to earn our breaks

We knew we could do it

Stay and follow through

Learning from what others do

We knew we could do it.

All

We Knew We Could Do It

We Knew We Could Do It

Sammy

I know I Can Do It!

I knew I could do it, and so did you (*looking at the cast, arms outstretched*)

(*elongated*) We knew we could do it, all along.

*The song ends with the entire cast joining hands, raising them high in triumph as the curtain falls.*

**Bows (music)**