A Chorus Line

By Arnold Schulman
Okay, get up on the stage, please.
Hi! How are ya?
God, it's good to see you.
How've you been?
How're you doing?
Okay, a little bit quicker.
One more time. One, two.
Pivot, step, walk, walk, walk.
The last part is:
pivot, step, walk, walk, walk.
Going to the end and,
five, six, seven, eight.
Again!
Step, push, step, step-touch, kick.
Again! Step, push, step, step.
Strong arms!
Again. Step, push,
sharp pivot, touch, kick.
Good.
Right.
Turn, turn, right, left.
Up, step, pivot, step-touch, kick.
And down! Got it?
Going on and, turn, turn, right, left,
chest, step. Five, six, seven, eight.
Turn, turn, right, left, chest, step.
Five, six, seven, eight.
Turn, turn, right, left, chest, step.
Pivot, step, walk, walk, walk.
The last part is:
pivot, step, walk, walk, walk.
Going to the end and,
five, six, seven, eight.
Okay. You. The girl in white,
the girl in blue,
boy in the green, Michele, Greg.
The boy with the headband, Diana...
yellow sweats, and the pink, stage left.
The rest, thank you very much.
Next group! Second combination.
Let's go!
Five, six, seven, eight.
Again.
We'll do it from the last turn.
Five, six, seven, eight.
Again.
Left, right, point, turn.
clap, point. Foot change.
Left, right, up, down.
Look, look. And hip.
One, two, turn, turn. And up!
Foot change.
Left, right, leap, cross.
Okay.
Connie, girl with the red headband,
the girl in gray, stage left.
The rest, thank you very much.
Next group!
Great.
-What's he looking for?
-Baryshnikov.
Don't worry.
You're going to be terrific.
Okay, come on.
Okay, that's enough.
As soon as you get inside,
pick up your numbered card.
Step, stretch kick.
Shoulder back.
Gentlemen, get ready!
The girl in pink, Sheila,
stage left.
The rest, thank you very much.
First group of guys!
Five, six, seven, eight.
Step, kick,
and down.
C'mon, make it strong, guys.
Step, kick.
Strong arms!
Turn, turn, right, left.
Push.
And down!
You, in the blue.
Yeah, you gotta get it on six.
That's it.
Grateful body, huh?
Hi.
All the way to the floor.
Oh, come on!
Hold it. This is all wrong.
Everybody back it up.
You in the green. You.
You, honey, come on.
Watch this. This is right.
Five, six, seven, eight!
Hip, hip, hip, hip.
Down, up. Push.
Back!
Okay. See what I'm saying?
Just like that.
Everybody, from the last section.
Six, seven, eight.
Al, the guy in the left.
Girl in the green.
You, boy in blue at the back.
Stage left.
The rest, thank you very much.
I've never been cut this soon.
Zach?
That's it. That's all of 'em.
Okay, everybody on stage.
Let's do the whole combination
from the top.
Let's go!
Right!
I want it strong!
Make it sharp.
Take it on the downbeat.
Ready? And,
five, six, seven, eight.
Five, six, seven, eight!
Larry.
Honey, you were great.
Does that stuff work?
It's better than nothing.
Clear the stage, please.
I'm gonna put you into groups.
So, listen up for your number.
First group is upstage right.

That is:
-Oh, I forgot my number!
Then when I come to a number
without a name that'll be you.
-Right. 12.
-Here.
-19.
-Yes.
-228.
-Yes!
-131.
-Here.
-32.
-Right here.
-46.
-Yes.
-41.
-Yeah.
-29.
-Here!
-52.
-Here.
-6.
-Yeah.
God, I hope I get it.
I hope I get it.
How many people does he need?
God, I hope I get it.
I hope I get it.
How many boys, how many girls?
How many boys, how many--?
-101.
-Yes.
-Judy Monroe.
-23!
-5.
-Yeah.
-25.
-Here!
-40.
-Yes.
-2.
-Yes.
-243.
-Yes.
Look at all the people!
At all the people!
How many people does he need?
How many boys?
How many girls?
How many people does he...?
I really need this job.
Please, God, I need this job.
I've got to get this job.
Okay.
First group, ballet combination.
Everybody else, clear the stage.
Second group, be ready.
One, two, three, four, five, six.
Morales, you're dancing with your tongue out again.
Oh, shit...
Next group!
One, two, three, four, five, six.
The girl in the yellow trunks.
Who, me?
Yes. Do you know any ballet?
No.
Don't dance.
Don't dance!!
Come on.
Larry, let's go.
One, two, three, four, five, six.
Sounds like God got out the wrong side of the bed.
I hate these auditions. I don't mind being treated like puppets, but worms?
Or merchandise?
I wouldn't mind him being such a shit if he wasn't that goddamned talented.
One, two, three, four, five, six.
The boy in the headband, head up.
Headband, head up!
-How long is he gonna keep us?
-Long.
-My day job starts at 4:00.
-Well, you'd better call in sick.
Make 'em sharp!
Next group of girls.
Jazz combination.
God, I really blew it,
I really blew it.
How could I do a thing like that?
How could I do a thing like that?
Now I'll never make it.
I'll never make it.
He doesn't like the way I look.
He doesn't like the way I dance.
He doesn't like the way I--
Blonde girl in the front, much better,
but still too tense. Relax.
I'm sorry.
Hi. I know there's an audition
going on but...
is there any way possible
I could see the director for a minute?
You can leave him a note.
Out, in.
Push, reach.
Take your time...
and... snap!
Walk, walk, out.
Walk, walk. Good.
With tempo. Seven, eight.
Left, right. Round. Clap.
Kick, step, pivot, step.
And down.
Right. Next group of girls.
Ok, I hope everybody was listening.
I don't wanna go over
the same thing twice.
Ready?
Five, six, seven, eight!
Hold it. Hold it.
Sheila, do me a favor.
Dance upstage.
You in the peach, downstage.
Five, six, seven, eight.
Okay. Next group of boys.
-Don't you know the combination, Sheila?
-I knew it when I was in the front.
Next group!
Chewing gum, get rid of it!
Six, seven, eight.
I'll pick it up in 15 minutes.
It's really important I get this
to the director right away.
I'm his secretary. Can I help you?
Sammy.
Sammy, a messenger is going to
pick this up.
-Could you get this to Zach, please?
-Yes. What is this in reference to?
Just tell him that--
Cassie wants to see him.
Cassie?
Didn't you use to be a dancer?
I saw you. It was in this theatre.
You stopped the show.
I was in highschool.
I'm sorry.
I didn't mean to say it that way,
that's not what I meant.
I'll get this to Zach right away.
Thanks.
My God.
I don't believe it! Come on.
What're you doing here?
Did anybody know you were coming?
No, I just came right from the airport.
Hang on.
Zach?
Look who's here.
Hi, Cassie.
Sorry to bust in on you like this.
No, it's good to see you.
We're running late.
I'm gonna have to call you.
Zach, it's really important
that I see you.
I'll call you, Cassie.
Leave the number with Larry.
Thank you.
Cass, wait. Hang around till
the first break. You know how Zach--
Larry, let's go.
Okay, let's go.
Five, six, seven, eight.
The last group of guys.
Five, six, seven, eight.
You're just fine.
Bring it down a bit.
-Bring it down?
-Yeah.
Come on, make it strong, guys.
Step, kick.
Strong arms!
Turn, turn, right, left.
Push!
And down!
You came down a little hard
on Cassie, don't you think?
Thanks, Kim.
Okay. We're eliminating down.
When Larry calls your number,
please stand in line.
Okay, girls first. 14.
-23.
-23!
The other girls,
thank you very much.
Come on.
Now boys. 18.
-17.
-That's me.
Excuse me.
The rest of the guys, thanks a lot.
God, I really got it,
I really got it.
I knew he liked me all the time.
I knew he liked me all the time.
I knew he liked me all the--
Listen up, everybody.
It's late and we've got a lot to do
before the next elimination.
You all get your pictures and resums
and give them to Larry. Thank you.
What's coming next?
God, it isn't over. It isn't over.
What happens now?
I can't imagine what he wants.
God, I hope I get it.
I hope I get it.
I've come this far, but even so
it could be yes, it could be no.
How many people does he--
I really need this job.
My unemployment is gone.
Please, God, I need this job.
I thought I had it from the start.
I've got to get this show.
Larry, would you collect them?
Kim, would you pick them up, please?
Thank you.
Who am I anyway?
Am I my resum?
That is a picture
of a person I don't know.
What does he want from me?
What should I try to be?
So many faces all around
and here we go.
I need this job.
Oh, God, I need
this show.
Zach?
Cassie, please. We're running late.
I'm here to audition, Zach.
Oh, come on.
It's nothing but chorus.
Okay, fine.
I'll audition for chorus.
Oh, Cassie, come on.
Okay, Larry, line 'em up.
Let's continue, please.
Starting from the right.
Step forward, tell me your real name,
stage name, if it's different,
where you were born and your age.
Cassie.
First, please.
My real name is...
Cass...
what's all this about the chorus?
Cass, what's all this chorus stuff?
Is Tina Mason still
in that apartment on 85th?
Tina Mason?
I haven't seen her for years.
~Yeah, credit card call to L.A.
~She went on to teaching.
~213-555-8535.
~Larry, come here a minute, will ya?
Yeah, sure!
~No, it's 213-555-8535-7298.
Hold on.
~Thank you. Hang on.
~Okay, I'll wait, okay.
Next, please.
Maggie Winslow.
Sometimes known as
Margaret, Margie. Peggy.
I was born in San Mateo, California,
on a Thursday evening, at 10:40 p.m,
August 17th, 1965.
Mike Cass...
but not always.
I used to be Timothy Michael
Cassiday O'Donoghue in Trenton...
New Jersey, where I was born
July 9th, 1960.
Connie Wong.
Always Wong, never right.
Bad joke.
I was born in Chinatown,
Lower East Side.
How old are you?
I was born December 5th,
My real name is
Sidney Kenneth Beckenstein.
My Jewish name is Rochmel Lev...
Ben Yokov Meyer Beckenstein.
My professional name...
is Gregory Gardner.
Very East Side,
and I do not deny it.
I happen to be a mere 28 years old.
Sheila Bryant.
Born in Colorado Springs, Colorado.
But I've always felt
more like... Park Avenue.
Oh, yes. I'm going to be 30 real soon,
and I'm real glad.
-You want to rent for three months?
-Right.
I'm Robert Charles Joseph
Henry Mills...
...III.
That's my real name, too.
I come from upstate New York,
near Buffalo.
I can't remember the name
of the town. I blocked it out.
Age?
Tell him, Bobby.
Why should I lie?
Age is only a state of mind.
What age do you want me to be?
Bobby, how old are you?
My name is Bebe--
Louder, please.
My name is Bebe Benson.
Beatrice Ann Benson.
Washington, D.C.
I'm 19 years old.
My name is Judy Monroe...
but my real name is Marilyn Monroe.
Oh, no, no, no.
It's always been Judy Monroe.
I'm 22 years old,
and I'm from El Paso.
El Paso, Texas.
Hi, my name is Richie Walters.
on a full moon in Herculaneum, Missouri.
And I'm black.
We've met before, Zach.
Alan Deluca.
Okay.
I'm Kristine Erlich.
Kristine Evelyn Erlich.
I'm 18 years old. Well,
in last September.
Tell him where you're from.
I'm from St. Louis...
Missouri.
Oh! And my married name is Deluca.
Great!
Congratulations, Al. I didn't know.
Thanks.
Hi.
As far as I'm concerned,
I'm Valerie Clarke...
but my parents seem to think
I'm Margaret Mary Hoolihan.
Couldn't you just die?
I was born in the middle of nowhere.
I mean, it wasn't even a town, really.
Near Arlington, Vermont.
How old are you?
Old.
and a half.
Mark Anthony, I think,
is going to be my stage name.
I'm really Mark Philip Tabori
from Tempe, Arizona.
I'm 17 years old,
and if I get this show,
I'll work real hard.
Jesus.
-Paul San Marco, that's my stage name.
-Sorry to bother you.
My real name is Ephrain Ramirez.
I was born in Spanish Harlem...
Could you hold it a minute?
Sorry. Uh...
Paul, was it?
Paul San Marco, that's my stage name.
My real name is Ephrain Ramirez.
I was born in Spanish Harlem
and I'm 22 years old.
My name is Diana Morales.
I didn't change it
because I thought ethnic was in.
Born 04-10-62,
on a Hollywood bed in the Bronx.
Go on, Diana.
Go on what?
I gave you my picture and resum.
Everything's on the back.
Tell me what's not on it.
Like what?
Tell me about the Bronx.
What's to tell about the Bronx?
It's uptown and to the right.
What made you start dancing?
Who knows?
I'm Puerto Rican.
We jump around a lot.
Look, you want to know if I can act?
Give me a scene to read. I'll act.
I'll perform.
But I can't just talk.
Please, I'm too nervous.
You want the job, don't you?
Of course I want the job.
Back in line.
Before we do any more dancing,
we'll do a lot of dancing later,
let me explain what I'm doing.
This is not gonna be
like other auditions.
-I'm looking for a strong chorus...
-I'm sorry, what?
...people who can work together
as a group...
but I'm going to try to shake you up,
see who you really are.
We've got some small
but important parts...
to be played by people in the chorus.
Since I need great dancers,
I can't expect you all
to be great actors.
So I don't want anybody...
to try to act.
Understand?
Just be exactly who you are,
which is just as important to me
as how well you dance.
I'm going to ask you some questions. What I want to know is
details about yourselves. Things you're proud of,
things you're ashamed of. So if anybody can't handle it
and wants to leave, right now is the time to make up your mind.
-Honey?
-What?
Could we please go?
We're going to be fine.
Okay...
Stay. We're Puerto Ricans. They say we're ashamed of everything.
Screw him. If I could think of anything I was ashamed of, I'd have tried it years ago.
Zach?
Look, Zach--
I just need a minute.
-How many jobs are there?
-Four and four.
-44?
-No, four and four.
Four boys, four girls.
Need any women?
Cassie.
Dick, I'm going to need a spotlight. Would you set it up for me, please?
I'm really sorry, but Zach said he'll call you as soon as he can.
And he told me to ask you in a nice way... if you'd-- would you mind leaving.
Shit.
Taxi!
Cassie!
Taxi!
-Are you all right?
-That was a hell of a fall.
-Are you okay?
-I'm fine. I'm fine.
Taxi!
-Bloomingdale's.
-Thanks a lot.
Okay, Mike. I'll start with you.
Me?
Aren't you supposed
to start at the end?
So, what would you like to tell me?
I'd like to tell you
to start at the end.
You can wait in the musicians' room.
What am I doing here?
He told me to leave.
I don't care if there's
a tornado out there.
-Shut up. Sorry, are you all right?
-I'm fine.
-You want to put some ice on that elbow?
-I look like a drowned rat.
What made you start dancing?
Because of my sister.
She was a girl.
So my Mom decided she's the one
to get all the dancing lessons.
Every Saturday my mother would take her.
Once in a while she'd take me along.
How old were you?
Four. Five.
I'd sit there all eager and...
I'm watchin' sis go pitter-pat.
Said, "I can do that".
"I can do that".
Knew every step right off the bat.
Said, "I can do that".
"I can do that!"
One morning sis
won't go to dance class.
I grab her shoes and tights and all.
But my foot's too small, so,
I stuff her shoes
with extra socks.
Ran seven blocks,
in nothing flat.
Hell, I can do that.
That I can do!
Give the man some room!
Yeah!
All right!
All thanks to sis,
I can do that.
You have any ice for my ego?
It hurts worse than my elbow.
What did you expect? You know what
Zach's like when he's working.
-If you keep interrupting him--
-Heh!
What're you talking to me
like I'm a grown-up for?
Just stay put.
-And keep that ice on your elbow.
-Larry.
Does Zach still think that I--?
Cassie, let's get one thing straight.
You can stay till you find a place.
But as far as you and Zach are concerned,
I'm not getting in the middle.
Actually, I don't know how
I turned out as heavenly as I did.
Are you going to do a routine?
No, no. Moving right along.
Start with your family.
Do you want to know all the wonderful
things that've happened to me?
Or you want the truth?
I'll take the truth.
My mother had a lot of card parties...
and was one of the foremost
bridge cheaters in America.
My father worked for this
big corporation.
They used to send him
out into the field a lot,
to drink.
But they were okay.
I was the strange one.
How strange?
Real, real strange.
Bizarre.
As I got older,
I got stranger and stranger.
That's when I started
breaking into people's houses.
I didn't steal anything,
I just rearranged their furniture.
I went to this very expensive
private school...
for the exceptionally stupid.
"Jock City".
I was the kid who was always
getting slammed into lockers.
Not only by the students,
by the teachers, too.
I couldn't catch a ball
if it had Elmer's glue on it...
and wouldn't my father have to be
this big ex-football hero.
He was so humiliated that he
didn't know what to tell his friends.
So, he told them all I had polio.
On Father's Day
I used to limp for him.
Oh! And I was always thinking up...
these spectacular ways
how to kill myself.
But I realized, to commit suicide
in Buffalo is redundant.
Okay, Bobby.
Exactly what you don't want, right?
Exactly.
Dick?
Give me the spotlight, will you?
Back to the left. A little more.
Hold it. Sheila.
Yes?
Is there anything you want to tell me?
What do I want to be
when I grow up?
Okay.
Young.
That light--
Don't you have anything softer?
Come closer.
Can I sit on your lap?
Do you always come on like this?
No. Sometimes I'm aggressive.
All right, Sheila.
Tell me about your parents.
My parents?
Tell me about your mother.
My mother.
My poor, dear, sweet, grey-haired, darling old mother.
She was raised in an orphanage, by nuns.
They wouldn't let her go out--
Goddamnit!
Can't anybody up there hear me?
Just let your hair down!
Can't you talk?
All of you! Just talk!
To me, to each other.
Jesus Christ!
Better?
Your mother...
Right.
My mother was kind of...
middle-aged and frumpy.
Whose isn't?
At 14 she was middle-aged and frumpy.
Is that the kind of woman your father liked?
No. My father liked them very young, tall...
and filled out
in all the right places.
Anyway, uh...
God knows why,
they had this daughter.
Me.
And just to get away from her frumpy middle-aged life...
she used to take me to every ballet that came to town.
I think probably because
it was cheaper than a baby-sitter.
That's when I saw that movie...
"The Red Shoes".
You too? It changed my whole life.
I saw that movie 112 times.
I swear, on the grave of my mother!
Go on, Sheila.
Well, let's face it.
My family scene was, uh,
not good.
Daddy thought
he married beneath him.
That's what he said,
that's what he said.
When he proposed
he informed my mother,
he was probably
her very last chance.
And though she was 22,
though she was 22,
though she was 22,
she married him.
Life with my dad
wasn't ever a picnic,
more like a "come-as-you-are".
When I was five
I remember my mother
dug earrings out of the car.
I knew that they weren't hers,
but it wasn't something
you'd want to discuss.
He wasn't warm.
Well, not to her.
Well, not to us.
But everything was beautiful
at the ballet.
Graceful men lift
lovely girls
in white.
Yes, everything was beautiful
at the ballet, hey.
I was happy
at the ballet.
That's when I started ballet class.
Up a steep
and very narrow stairway
to a voice like a metronome.
Up a steep
and very narrow stairway
it wasn't paradise,
it wasn't paradise,
it wasn't paradise,
but it was home.
Mother always said
I'd be very attractive,
when I grew up, when I grew up.
"Different", she said,
"with a special something,"
"and a very, very personal flair".
And though I was eight or nine,
and though I was eight or nine,
and though I was eight or nine,
I hated her.
Now, "different" is nice,
but it sure isn't pretty.
Pretty is what it's about.
I never met anyone
who was "different"
who couldn't figure that out.
So beautiful
I'd never live to see.
But it was clear,
if not to her,
well, then to me,
that everyone is beautiful
at the ballet.
Every prince has got to have
his swan.
Yes, everyone is beautiful
at the ballet.
I was pretty
at the ballet.
I was born to save their marriage.
But when my father came to pick
me and my mother up at the hospital,
he said,
"I thought this was going to help,"
"but I guess not."
A few months later he left and never came back.
Anyway, I had this incredible fantasy life. I used to dance around the living-room, with my arms up, like this. And in my fantasy there was this Indian chief, and he'd say to me, "Maggie, do you want to dance?" And I'd say, "Daddy, I would love to dance." Yes, everything was beautiful at the ballet. Raise your arms and someone's always there. Yes, everything was beautiful at the ballet. The ballet. Yes, everything was beautiful at the ballet. I was pretty, I was happy, I would love to, at the ballet. Where the hell is the resumé of the blonde in the two-piece? This one? Bebe Benson. Can we smoke? Can the adults please smoke? No breaks, Sheila. Then, can I discuss that with my kidneys? —Fine. —Thank you. Kristine. Me? I don't know where to begin. Tell him how you got started dancing. Well, it was when this man came around my home...
Lessons.

Yeah! Lessons.
Dancing lessons.
And-- well, ever since then,
I watched everything on TV
that had any dancing on it.
Specially--
Oh, God, um--
What do you call 'em? Uh,
Variety shows.
Right! Variety shows.
Specials.
I can't remember
what I was talking about.
Variety shows.
No, I wasn't-- it was--
Specials. The specials.
Right.
Um, specials.
Oh, God.
I'm sorry.
It's just I'm really nervous.
You want to take a minute
to pull yourself together?
Uh, Zach...
For her, this is together.
Robbie...
they're in a suitcase
over there, somewhere. Cass--
Sheila, get your ass
up on the stage.
Why is it only my ass that
ever gets invited places?
Please, Al. Your turn.
Costumes are in there.
Hats should be in this one.
Listen, go up to the prop room,
we've been using it for an office.
I think you'd better
stay out of sight for a while.
I know I'm putting you in a spot,
but I need a job.
-I really do need--
-Hey, hey.
I'll talk to Zach, but you've got to
stay put, for Christ sake.
No more interruptions, okay?
Promise?
Say, "I promise."
-I promise.
-Okay.
But I'm straight.
I'm not too bright,
but I'm not too dumb.
And...
I'm not too talented.
But you know me, Zach.
You show me what to do,
and I'm gonna do it
the exact same way,
eight shows a week, forever.
Can I go next?
I don't really have
anything to say, it's just that...
this waiting is killing me!
Okay.
Why don't we, uh,
start with your childhood?
It was terrible,
just like everybody else's.
All of it?
None of it, really.
But who wants to admit
to a happy childhood?
How about sex?
Sex?
Oh, sex!
Now, that was really terrible!
How?
I was twelve years old
and I didn't know much about it.
So I went to the library
I took out this medical book...
with pictures
of the male and female anatomy in it.
I thought it was pretty interesting.
I used to read that book a lot!
Were you interested in medicine?
Or were you just into the pictures?
I knew what I wanted to know...
Hello, twelve.
Hello, thirteen.
Hello, love.
Anyway, after I had my first--
wet dream, I went straight to
the medical book and looked it up.
"Milky discharge... "
Oh, my God! Gonorrhea!
Changes, oh.
Down below.
Up above.
I couldn't ask my Dad about it.
I was in shock!
I mean, God!
I didn't have anybody to talk to.
So, well, I went to the priest.
When I told him I had gonorrhea,
was he in shock!
"Who have you been with, my son?"
"Nobody, uh... Nobody."
"Then how can you have gonorrhea?"
Well, finally,
I told him about the book, and...
he set me straight.
Which is the only time
the church ever helped me out.
Time to doubt,
to break out.
It's a mess.
It's a mess!
Sex happens to be one subject
I can speak about...
with absolutely
no authority whatsoever.
Too young to take over.
It took me five years...
Too old to ignore.
Finally I got a girl
who was actually willing to do it.
There I am, making out in the
backseat with Sally Ketchum.
A little of this, a little of that.  
Very little of that.  
After about an hour she said,  
"Don't you want to do anything else?"  
I suddenly thought to myself...  
"No, I don't."

Did this come  
as a big surprise to you?  
I guess.  
Yeah.  
It was the moment  
I realized I was gay.  
Hello, twelve.  
Hello, thirteen.  
Hello, love.  
Talk about love. My first time  
was with this girl, Paulette.  
Forget about it.  
We did it in a graveyard.  
First time we made love  
it was a great deal.  
I was too scared to feel,  
nervous from trying.  
Next time we made love  
still we were not a hit.  
I thought, if this is it,  
everyone's lying.  
But then we did it again,  
and I forgot to be scared,  
I guess.  
'Cause when we did it again  
I closed my eyes...  
Surprise!  
Sweet, icicle hot,  
smooth as a lemon pie.  
Sailing across the sky,  
into the ocean.  
We liked it a lot,  
you can imagine why.  
We had begun to fly,  
feelings in motion.  
And then we did it again.  
I'm thinking,  
"was it beginner's luck?"
Or is it wonderful once
in each three tries?
Surprise!
Surprise.
First time.
Love.
Again.
So I closed my eyes.
It was a sweet surprise.
Icicle hot,
smooth as a lemon pie.
Surprise, surprise,
surprise, surprise.
I mean it! How would you like
to stay 12 years old all your life?
My last show, I played a 14-year-old.
and I just turned 23.
The Year of the Chicken?
Cought.
Hey, didn't you go to the
High School of Performing Arts?
I thought you looked familiar!
Do you remember Mr. Karp,
the acting teacher?
Oh, yeah.
"In order to be a real actor,
it is not enough to act like a king."
"You also got to act like a throne."
Tell me about it, Morales.
On the first day of acting class,
Mr. Karp puts us on the stage,
with our legs around each other,
one in back of the other, and he says,
"We're going to do improvisations."
"You're on a bobsled."
"It's snowing out."
"And it's cold."
"Okay. Go."
Every day for a week
we'd try to feel the motion,
feel the motion,
down the hill.
Every day for a week
we'd try to hear the wind rush,
hear the wind rush
feel the chill.
So I dug right down
to the bottom of my soul,
to see what I had inside.
Yes, I dug right down
to the bottom of my soul,
and I tried.
I tried.
And everybody's going,
"Whoosh, whoosh!"
"I feel the snow!"
"I feel the cold!"
"I feel the air!"
Mr. Karp comes up to me
and he says,
"Okay, Morales, what did you feel?"
And I said,
"Nothing, I'm feeling nothing."
And he said, "Nothing
could get a girl transferred."
They all felt something,
but I felt nothing,
except the feeling that
this bullshit was absurd.
So I said to myself,
"Don't worry about it."
"It's only the first week.
Maybe it's genetic."
"They don't have bobsleds
in San Juan."
Second week, more advanced,
and we had to be a table,
be a sports car,
ice-cream cone.
Mr. Karp, he would say,
"Very good, except Morales."
"Try, Morales, all alone."
So I dug right down
to the bottom of my soul
to see how an ice-cream felt.
Yes, I dug right down
to the bottom of my soul
and I tried
to melt.
And the kids yelled "Nothing!".
They called me "Nothing",
and Karp allowed it,
which really made me burn.
They were so helpful!
They called me "hopeless",
until I really didn't know
where else to turn.
Mr. Karp comes up to me and says,
"You know what, Morales?
I think you should try the Girls' High."
"You'll never be an actress. Never."
Jesus Christ.
Went to church, praying
"Santa Maria, send me guidance",
"send me guidance", on my knees.
Went to church, praying
"Santa Maria, help me feel it",
"help me feel it, pretty please".
And a voice from down at
the bottom of my soul
came up to the top of my head.
A voice from down at
the bottom of my soul,
here is what it said,
"This man is nothing,
this course is nothing."
"If you want something,
go find a better class".
"And when you find one
you'll be an actress".
And I assure you
that's what finally came to pass.
Six months later I heard
that Karp
had died.
So I dug way down
to the bottom of my soul,
and cried,
'cause I felt...
nothing.
Okay, Don.
To be honest, I've been listening
to these people all day long...
tyre to be honest. I mean,
say I pull a hamstring, you know?
Let's be honest. Here today,
gone tomorrow. You know what I mean?
Like the couple over here,
that just got married. I mean--
Every time I tell my wife
I'm going to audition,
well, she's got a right to--
you know?
I mean-- What the hell!
It's not a question of--
You know what I mean?
I'm a damned good waiter.
I got two kids, and a wife,
a mother on social security
I'm trying to keep from eating cat food.
So my daytime job--
It's not a question of--
Look, I'm a waiter,
that's what I am.
On applications it says "occupation",
I put "dancer".
You know how many waiter jobs
I'm fired of?
One time late, sure,
but auditions, never, you know?
One of my kids, sometimes...
like my wife says...
But, come on! On applications?
Tuesday, Wednesday. Summer, winter.
I mean, Jesus!
Look, I'm married to this sweetest
little wife in the world, but, uh...
I don't know...
Listen, before madam here
makes a big deal out of it,
Cassie is in the prop room till
the rain stops. I told her to.
What is she doing this for?
I don't think
she's been working too much.
What do you mean? She's broke?
Is that it? She needs money?
-I have no idea.
-I don't know.
Talk to her.
Val?
Goddamnit, Larry!
Is the loading door closed?
I'll get it.
Go ahead, Val. I'm sorry.
First of all,
let's get one thing straight.
I never heard of "The Red Shoes",
I never saw "The Red Shoes"...
I don't give a shit about
"The Red Shoes".
I came to New York because I wanted
to be a Rockette at Radio City.
There was this girl in my home town,
Betty Lou Heiner.
She had actually gotten out,
she made it in New York.
She was a Rockette.
One Christmas, she came home for a visit,
and they gave her a parade.
A goddamn parade!
I had to twirl a friggin' baton
in the pouring rain for two hours.
Unfortunately, though,
she got knocked up over Christmas.
Merry Christmas!
Anyway, that was my plan,
to be a Rockette.
But the problem was, I was so ugly
you wouldn't believe it.
I mean, I was homely. Skinny.
Flat as a pancake.
But anyway, there I was.
I got off the bus,
wearing my little white tights,
little white shoes, little white dress.
I looked like a fucking nurse.
Six months later, I finally got
my audition at Radio City.
You know what the man said to me?
He said he didn't like my fan kicks.
I can do terrific fan kicks!
So I said, "Screw you,
Radio City and the Rockettes!"
"I'm going to make it on Broadway."
But in every audition,
I would dance rings
around the other girls,
but I wound up in the alley
with the other rejects.
Until one day,
after an audition,
I swiped my dance card.
On a scale of 1 to 10
they gave me for dance...
For looks...

Dance:
And I'm still on unemployment.
Dancing for my own enjoyment,
that ain't it, kid,
that ain't it, kid.

Dance:
is like to die.
Left the theater,
called the doctor for
my appointment to buy...
tits and ass,
bought myself a fancy pair.
Tightened up the derriere,
did the nose with it,
all that goes with it.
Tits and ass,
had the bingo-bongos done.
Suddenly I'm getting
national tours.
Tits and ass,
won't get you jobs
unless they're yours.
Didn't cost a fortune, neither.
Didn't hurt my sex life, either.
Flat and sassy,
I would get the strays and losers.
Beggars really can't be choosers.
That ain't it, kid,
that ain't it, kid.
Fixed the chassis.
"How do you do?"
Life turned into
an endless medley of:
"Gee, it had to be you"
Why?
Tits and ass.
Where the cupboard once was bare
now you knock and someone's there.
You have got 'em, hey,
top to bottom, hey!
It's a gas!
Just a dash of silicone.
Shake your new maracas
and you're fine!
Tits and ass,
can change your life.
They sure changed mine.
You're all looking at my tits now,
aren't you?
I'd settle for just one of yours.
Well, go out and buy them.
Have it all done.
Honey, take my word.
Grab a cab, c'mon,
see the wizard on
Park and 73rd.
For...
tits and ass.
Orchestra and balcony.
What they want is what you see.
Keep the best of you,
do the rest of you.
Pits or class,
I have never seen it fail.
Debutante or chorus girl
or wife.
Tits and ass,
yes, tits and ass,
have changed my life.
Thank you, Val.
Paul.
Sir?
When did you start dancing?
Not until pretty late.
Why?
I don't know why.
I just didn't.
What did you do?
Nothing much.
What was your family like?
We were close.
Any brothers and sisters?
Two sisters.
One died when I was 14.
How?
I really don't want
to talk about that.
I mean,
why do we have to talk about that?
Okay, Paul. Thank you.
Back in line.
Can he keep us standing here
this long?
Zach?
We've been standing here
for quite a while.
So, maybe we can take a five?
Take five, everybody.
Five means five, guys, not fifteen.
Stanley, can I hear the "One" routine
starting after the insert?
Uncle Larry's heartbreak kit.
One totally indigestible
cold pastrami.
One lukewarm celery tonic.
I'm going back on the 6:30 plane.
That sure's silly. You just
got here and I just talked to Zach.
C'mon, Larry, what's the point?
He doesn't think I came for a job. He--
Tell me the truth.
When I left, how did he take it?
You know how I knew how bad
he wanted me back?
'Cause he didn't call me once. Not once to beg me: "Please, come back." As if I would, of course. It's not that he can't be sweet funny and even warm, but I-- Look, Larry, do me a favor, will ya? He is what he is, and that's that. Just stop talking about him, okay? Cassie, Zach asked me to give you this. It's the telephone number of his business manager, in case you'd-- Well, he thought you might need-- Some money? Cassie, he didn't mean-- Money. "If I need some money"! All he meant was-- Please. If you change your mind about going back... My sister was such a little brat, that was the reason. But still, I guess it was a little extreme shaving her head. Would you like to hear about the first time I saw a dead body? I guess I was six or seven... Larry! Where the hell is Larry? Larry, do me a favor. Everybody, go downstairs and learn the lyrics to the "One" routine. Okay, let's go. Kill the rail and hit the work lights, please. Cassie... I'm trying to work. Me, too! That's what I'm trying to do. I don't need a handout. I need a job. Goddamnit! It's my turn to audition, like everybody else!
No. No, you shouldn't have come.
And if you'd called me,
I would've saved you the trouble.
This is for chorus,
it's not for you.
But this is the only place
there is for me!
Zach, I'm a gypsy.
I never had an apartment in my life
that wasn't a sublet.
All I know how to do
is to point my toes and leap.
I, oh, Zach...
I'm a dancer.
That's who I am.
What I do.
I,
I am a dancer.
Give me the steps,
I'll come through.
Give me somebody to dance for.
Give me somebody to show.
Let me wake up
in the morning to find
I have somewhere exciting to go.
Christ, Cassie,
how can I put you in a line?
You don't fit.
You're too goddamned good!
You bet I am! And I'm so good
I can dance any way you want me to.
Let me dance for you,
let me try.
Let me dance for you.
We made a lot of music dancing,
you and I.
"We"? Are you talking about us?
-No, Zach.
I'm talking about a job.
I haven't worked in over a year.
Please,
give me an answer.
Give me a place
to begin.
I am a dancer.
I have come home!
Let me in.
Give me somebody to dance with.
Give me somebody to be.
Let me wake up
feeling terribly proud
that the girl in the mirror
is me.
Let me dance for you,
let me try.
Let me dance for you.
We made a lot of music dancing,
you and I.
Let me dance for you,
let me try.
Let me dance for you.
We made a lot of music dancing,
you and--
Cassie!
All right.
Go down with the others
and learn the lyrics.
We'll see.
Hello?
Hello?
Yes, Paul?
I just wanted to ask,
If I can't talk
about myself, I'm out?
I think you're
a hell of a dancer, Paul.
I can't do it.
I wish I could,
but I just can't.
Let me ask you something.
I'm curious.
If you were gonna change your name,
why did you go from
Puerto Rican to Italian?
People always used to say
I don't look Puerto Rican.
So you figured you look Italian?
No.
I just wanted to be somebody new.
So I became Paul San Marco.
Why would you want to be somebody new?
I don't know.
I'm not too proud of myself, I guess.
Why did you decide to become a dancer?
My father loves movies. When I was a kid, he used to take us all the time to 42nd St.
The ones I loved were the musicals.
How old were you? Ten or eleven.
with all those crazies?
He didn't know that.
It was cheap and--
Anyway, because of my eyes--
I wear contacts now, I'd have to move down front by myself, so I could see.
And all these strange men would come and sit beside me, and play with me, you know?
"Look, Paul, if this is too rough, uh--"
"No. I mean, I knew I was gay."
In school, they'd whistle at me in the halls and everything.
But what really bothered me was I didn't know how to be a man.
What was your first job as a dancer?
At the Jewel Box Revue. A drag show. I was fifteen.
I went to audition, but they weren't interested in my dancing.
They said, "Show us your legs", they took me to a filthy rat hole.
They shaved my legs, and put a pair of nylon stockings on me, and high heels.
There I was, in show business.
The asshole
of show business, but a job.
-What did you tell your parents?
-That I was a dancer in a show.
Not what kind, of course.
They couldn't stop bragging.
Go on, Paul.
The show was going to Chicago.
My parents wanted to bring my suitcase,
down to the theatre, after the show,
to say goodbye and--
I don't know why, I said okay.
We were doing this Oriental number,
I was wearing an Oriental dress
and this enormous headdress,
with gold balls hanging all over it.
I was going down the steps,
for the finale, when I saw my parents.
They got there too early.
I freaked out, didn't know what to do.
I ran past them, as quick as I could,
hoping they wouldn't recognize me.
But the minute I passed,
I heard my mother say...
"Oh, my God."
I died!
After the show, I took off
my make-up, put on my clothes,
not knowing if they'd be
downstairs or what.
But there they were, standing
in the middle of all these freaks.
You should've seen my parents.
They didn't know where to look.
My mother had the guts
to look me in the eyes.
I could tell she'd been crying.
"Make sure you eat good," she said.
Bu then my father
couldn't even look at me.
"Take care of yourself," he said.
And they started out.
But then my father turned around
and went over to the producer.
"Take care of my son," he said.
That was the first time
he ever called me that.
Come on.
Zach?
Are you okay?
Go grab a hat.
Let's go, Larry. Bring them in.
Okay, everybody!
We're back up on stage! Let's go!
every move that she makes
We can, we can.
One smile and suddenly nobody
Take one that fits.
Don't keep him waiting.
All right.
Let's go with the combination that
goes with the lyrics you just learned.
Everybody on the stage
and spread out.
-Hit the rail lights, please.
-Is this where he picks the eight?
This is important.
I want to see unison dancing.
Every head, arm, body angle,
exactly the same.
I don't want anybody
to pull my focus.
Okay, Larry.
Okay, let's review it.
Starting position is upstage.
Just to remind you.
Chin up, hat down.
Pop the right heel.
Reverse directions.
Five, six, seven, eight!
One
singular sensation
every little step she takes.
Okay, hold it. Hold it.
You with us? Okay.
On "singular sensation",
make sure your arm goes
all the way across your face
and back to shoulder.
Three, four!
singular sensation
every little step she takes.
One
thrilling combination
every move that she makes.
Six, seven, eight.
One smile and suddenly, nobody
else will do.
You know you'll
never be lonely with
you know who.
One
Okay, hold it! Let's go on,
away from the mirrors.
-Excuse me.
-Yeah.
After the grapevine,
when do we pop the chin?
-You pop the chin on two.
-And when does the hat go up?
Hat goes up on five.
One, two, three, four, five.
Okay, listen up!
Larry's got the style I'm looking for.
Very thirties. Keep your eye on Larry.
Let's continue now from
"moment in her presence".
And,
five, six, seven, eight!
One
moment in her presence
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
to none,
son.
Ooh! Sigh!
Give her your attention.
Do... I...
really have to mention
she's the
One?
Okay, let me see you
in groups of four.
This time I want to hear
the lyrics in each group.
And,
five, six, seven, eight.
One
singular sensation
One, turn, up, down.
every little step she takes.
One, turn, up, down.
Spotlight, out, in,
step back, step back
every move that she makes.
Five, six, seven, eight.
One smile and suddenly, nobody
else will do.
Step to front, sharp, hat.
One, two, three, four, turn around.
you know who.
One
moment in her presence
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
to none
Ooh! Sigh!
Give her your attention.
Do... I...
really have to mention
she's the
One?
Okay, girls, just the girls,
from the second section.
Here we go!
Five, six, seven, eight.
One
moment in her presence,
-Cassie, don't roll the shoulders.
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
-Diana, sharp in with the leg.
to none
son.
Ooh! Sigh!
Give her your attention.
Do... I...
really have to mention
she's the
One?
-Cassie, there's no release in the head.
Boys! From the top.
Five, six, seven, eight.
One
-Cassie!
singular sensation
Do it again with the boys.
You're still doing it too much.
One
-Don't pop the head, Cassie.
thrilling combination
every move that she makes.
One smile and suddenly, nobody
else will do.
You know you'll
never be lonely with
you know who.
One
-Cassie, this isn't Vegas.
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
This isn't a solo, Cassie.
Look around.
-Get your kicks even!
son.
Ooh! Sigh!
Give her your attention.
Do... I...
really have to mention--
Goddamnit, Cassie, you're disturbing
the combination! Now, pull in!
One?
Okay, everybody, from the top!
Let's go!
Five, six, seven, eight.
One
singular sensation
every little step she takes.
One
thrilling combination
every move that she makes.
One smile and suddenly, nobody
else will do.
You know you'll
never be lonely with
you know who.
One
moment in her presence
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
to none,
son.
Cassie!
Give her your attention.
Come down here!
really have to mention
she's the
One?
One smile and suddenly, nobody
else will do.
You know you'll
never be lonely with
you know who.
-Turn around and look at the routine.
Is that what you really want?
One
moment in her presence
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
to none,
son!
Ooh! Sigh!
Give her your attention.
Do... I...
really have to mention
she's the
One!
One!
One!
One!
That's who I am.
No, you're not! You're special!
Zach, we're all special. Paul, Bebe,
Sheila and everybody up there.
Damn it!
You know what I'm talking about!
Look at them.
Look at them.
Why did you leave me?
Why, Zach, you noticed.
At least you could've told me
about that job in Hollywood--
And what would you've told me
if I told you? "Take it", right?
-I didn't want you to tell me "Take it".
-What're you talking about? You took it!
That's one thing, my taking it.
Your telling me "take it"
is something else.
Anyway, you're the one who left,
months before I went to Hollywood.
I left? We were living together!
Sharing the same apartment, maybe.
But when did I ever see you?
Now what're you giving me?
The neglected woman bullshit?
You were jealous of my work?
-You acted so proud of what I was doing.
-Zach, I was proud! I still am.
And I know that directing a show
takes 24 hours a day...
which I wanted for you
as much as you--
As long as I spend an equal 24 hours
with you, right?
-Exactly! That's all I wanted.
-And you're going to tell me
exactly how I could've done that?
If I knew that, then I'd be the hit
and you'd be asking me for a job.
Cassie.
Jesus.
Don't you know why
I took that job in Hollywood?
Not for me. For you.
It was the only way that
I could hold you, I thought,
was to be a star like you.
Make you want me again.
Treat me important.
Ready, Zach?
Who do you want to pick?
I don't know yet.
Let's do the tap combination
and start matching them up.
Okay, everybody,
for the tap combination...
we're gonna start
after the second eight count.
Girls downstage, boys upstage.
Nice and easy. And,
five, six, seven, eight.
Kiss today goodbye,
The sweetness and the sorrow.
Wish me luck,
the same to you,
but I can't regret
what I did for love.
What I did for love.
Look, my eyes are dry.
The gift was ours to borrow.
It's as if we always
knew.
And I won't regret
what I did for love.
What I did for love.
Gone,
love is never gone.
As we travel on
love's what we'll remember.
Kiss today goodbye
and point me toward tomorrow.
We did what we had to do.
Won't forget, can't regret
what I did for love.
What I did for love.
What I did for
love.
Okay, we're gonna put you
into groups of four.
Two and two. Let me see.
Mike, Maggie. Paul, Connie.
Girls downstage, boys upstage.
Let's go!
Ready?
Five, six, seven, and eight!.
Connie, smile bigger,
if you gotta fake it.
Tapping's not my strongest point.
What?
Tapping's not my strongest point!
I see that.
I'll be right back.
-Paul! You all right?
-Don't move him! Don't move him.
Larry, call Dr. Rhodes.
It's his knee, the cartilage.
He had it operated on last year.
Don't move him, don't move him.
Maybe we should put something
under his knee.
-Get him the ice bag.
-It's okay, really. I just twisted it.
-Does anyone have any Darvon? Valium?
-I do.
-Somebody get some water.
-I'll get it.
It's already swelling.
You're gonna be okay, Paul.
You're gonna be just fine.
You think we should give him that?
-We don't know what's wrong.
-I've had three already, since lunch.
-It's just a muscle relaxer.
-Zach, Rhodes is at St. Joseph's.
He said to bring him to Emergency.
He'll be waiting.
-where's his handbag?
-I'll get it!
-You got the knee?
-Yeah, I got it.
Paul, you'll be all right. Rhodes is
the best knee doctor in the city.
-Paul, I got your bag!
-Good luck, Paul.
Call me from the hospital!
Do you ever think about what you're gonna do if you stop dancing?
Me?
Yeah.
Real life, I guess.
What? Getting married, having babies?
Go off my diet.
What about you, Mark?
Do you want to spend your life dancing in a chorus?
I'd just like to get in one.
You don't remember, but we were in a show together, in the chorus, about a hundred years ago.
Of course I remember.
You were a rotten dancer.
Why do you think I became a choreographer?
How've you been, Sheila?
God, since then, I don't know.
Good, terrific...
okay, so-so.
You know I actually found the glass slipper once, and it fit.
But then it broke.
I have a daughter. She's nine.
She loves me a lot, hates me a lot.
And, uh...
God help her, she wants to be a dancer.
What's so wrong about that?
How can anybody in their right mind want to be anything else?
I remember I used to stand outside this stage door, and watch the girls come out,

and think:
"God, can anything like that ever happen to me?"
But now I meet somebody,
and they say:
"Wow, you dance on Broadway?
"You got somewhere. You're something."
Hell of a day, huh?
Yeah...
A few months ago,
the night before I was going to
audition for a new show,
I had a-- kind of breakdown.
I started crying and I couldn't stop
for about two weeks.
I just got out of the hospital and...
my doctor told me it was
too soon to try again.
But I did.
And now, even if I lose,
I won.
Hell of a day.
Larry.
-Line 'em up, Zach?
-Yeah, line 'em up.
Okay. Everybody on the line.
Before we start eliminating...
You're all terrific,
and special.
Very special. I wish I could
hire you all but I can't.
So, the following people
please step forward.
Judy.
Don.
Greg.
Sheila.
Al.
Diana.
No. Excuse me.
Diana,
will you get back in line, please?
Kristine.
Connie.
Maggie.
Front line, thank you very much.
I'm sorry.
Rehearsals begin September 22nd.
We're going to rehearse for six weeks, with a two-week out of town tryout. It could be Boston or Philadelphia. The New York opening will be some time mid-January. Prepare to sign the standard minimum contract, with a six-month rider. Check with Larry to set an appointment for your costume measurings. Bring your dance shoes and sneakers to all rehearsals. Please, do not, I repeat, do not change your hairstyle or color. I'm really happy that we'll be working together. I gotta tell you, I'm really excited. Thank you, very much. Thank you. Dick? That's it. Thanks a lot. Cassie.
How you dress! You know, you can get arrested for wearing those colors? One singular sensation every little step she takes. One thrilling combination every move that she makes. One smile and suddenly nobody else will do. You know you'll never be lonely with you know who. She walks into a room and you know she's uncommonly rare, very unique, peripatetic, poetic and chic. She walks into a room and you know from her maddening pose, effortless whirl,
she's a special girl.  
Strolling,  
can't help  
all of her qualities extolling.  
Loaded with charisma is my  
jauntily sauntering  
ambling shambler.  
-One  
-She walks into a room  
-moment in her presence  
-and you know you must  
-and you can forget the rest.  
-shuffle along, join the parade.  
She's the quintessence  
of making the grade.  
-For the girl is second best  
-This is whatcha call trav'ling.  
-To none,  
-Oh, strut your stuff!  
-son,  
-Can't get enough  
-Ooh! Sigh!  
-of  
-Give her your attention.  
-her.  
-Do... I...  
-Love  
-really have to mention  
-her.  
-she's  
-I'm a son of a gun,  
-the  
-she is one of a  
-One?  
-kind.  
One  
singular sensation  
every little step she takes.  
One  
thrilling combination  
every move that she makes.  
One smile and suddenly nobody  
else will do.  
You know you'll
never be lonely with
you know who.
One
moment in her presence
and you can forget the rest,
for the girl is second best
to none,
son.
Ooh! Sigh!
Give her your attention.
Do... I...
really have to mention
she's the
she's the
she's the
One?