

TURNOVER: A NEW LEAF

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A Floral-Herbal Musical

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## PLOT SUMMARY

TURNOVER is an herbal fable about a queer family turning a Vietnamese family's life around. It plots a tanning salon by a nightclub, respectively Tan Salontro and FigLeaf Nightclub.

In Dirty City, a Cilantro arrives. Rau Răm is an Asian immigrant and expectant mother hoping to start a tanning salon business. When no one can spare a plot of land, Malus Crabapple welcomes her with a neighboring open plot. Rau is a bit hesitant due to Malus's gay nightclub known as FigLeaf. But FigLeaf patrons have a liking for Rau's body oil that spices up their skins. Rau happily takes their money but cannot support their "lifestyles." But the major turnover would be Rau's son: Parsley ("Turnover").

This teen operates the day-to-day Tan Salontro business and spends the nights with his mom ("A Natural"). Later, Malus introduces Parsley to their teenage nibbling, Pyrus. Parsley helps Pyrus with issues that they have with the other flowers ("Grow a Pair"). Pyrus pays Parsley with a new beverage, called Miracle, and invites him to hang out ("Test the Water").

Parsley asks his mom to see a movie with Pyrus. She reluctantly lets him go. At Cantaloupe Outlets, Parsley and Pyrus pose in a photo booth ("Photosynthesis"). Pyrus takes him clothes shopping. He discovers a liking for different floral styles, especially crop tops ("Crop Top"). Nearby, Rau picks a fight with Malus due to Parsley's sudden sense of freedom. They soon bump into Parsley and Pyrus. Rau gets upset at Parsley's crop top. Malus explains Rau's prejudice to Pyrus ("Soiled").

Parsley is grounded ("Fertile"). Soon, Pyrus helps Parsley sneak out. They have the time of their lives ("Dirt on You"). However, herbs are not accustomed to the nightlife and this one is especially underaged. Parsley ends up in the hospital, getting their stoma pumped.

Rau sees the light of their ways with Malus ("Green Card"). FigLeaf shuts down due to the violation of underage drinking laws. Pyrus visits Parsley, letting him know that they prepare to move ("Sterilize"). Rau offers Pyrus a summer job if they ever are around again. After all, it is a family business ("Turnover").

What are the turnovers of this sunny salon and this night saloon? How a growing child flips over to and accepts the darkness is the petal of this floral coming-of-age story.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**PARSLEY** RĂM, teen, Rau's son

**RAU** RĂM, adult, Parsley's mother and the owner of Tan Salontro

**PYRUS** CRABAPPLE, older teen, Malus's nibbling

**MALUS** CRABAPPLE, adult, the owner of FigLeaf Nightclub

## Orchestra

**DJ CAULIFLOWER**, the alias for the production's music director, who may briefly interact with the performers.

✿ Androgyny Botany: Each character resembles the androgynous nature, with open-ended vocal requirements

✿ People of the Global Majority most represent the experiences of these flowers and herbs; cast accordingly

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. "Turnover (A New Start)" Rau, Malus
2. "A Natural" Rau
3. "Grow a Pair" Pyrus, Parsley
4. "Test the Water" Parsley
5. "Photosynthesis" Parsley, Pyrus
6. "Crop Top" Pyrus, Parsley
7. "Soiled (The Family Name)" Rau, Malus, Parsley, Pyrus
8. "Fertile" Parsley
9. "Dirt on You (Your Botany Brings the Dirt to the Yard)" Pyrus, Parsley
10. "Green Card" Rau, Malus
11. "Sterilize" Pyrus, Parsley
12. "Turnover (A New Leaf)" Company

SCENE 1

DIRTY CITY

Dirty City is if Grand Rapids was entirely Frederik Meijer Gardens. The city is scaled down so that a single block takes a single step. Empty plots of land scatter about. It is between seasons. Any season.

RAU enters. Her hair is unearthly. Her tan gleams. She is expecting a new seed. She tries to plant herself in an empty plot of dirt.

A picket that reads "Curb the Herbs" projects upon that plot.

RAU moves to another empty plot of land. The same message projects. RAU repeats. The message repeats.

The Sun sets.

RAU collapses on the concrete with her body facing the sunset. She feels her belly.

RAU

Sun... A leaf is not meant to turn from this light.

MALUS enters, opposite of the sunset. They are barely clothed.

MALUS

Turn over to the night.

RAU turns away from the sunset.

RAU

*Chào.* Aren't you an angel?

MALUS

*Hello.* Aren't all Figs?

RAU

*Any Fig is a malice!*

MALUS

That's my name: Malus Crabapple. I am a Fig-

RAU

Ment of my imagination.

MALUS

Does your imagination include a better life for yourself here?

RAU

Any plant can imagine. A Cilantro can dream! This city needs its garnishes. Imagine Dirty City's first-ever tanning salon. I *dream* of a better life for my family here...

MALUS

You immigrants have wild dreams. *But imaginations*. You cannot imagine people like me living by your family, let alone amongst yours, wherever you come from.

RAU

You don't know where I come from.

MALUS

Like a leaf, my people are open enough to fly all around the world. You took a leave from Southeast Asia? All your last names are like... *Weed (re: Nguyen)?*

RAU

Răm. Rau Răm. There are more family names out there in Vietnam. And no. You don't know the daily life I came from.

MALUS

Well Rau, I won't judge your days if you don't judge my nights.

RAU

I don't know where your nightlife comes from.

MALUS

It stems from birth.

RAU

You chose this light. This lifestyle you have. It is not something you are born with. You are not natural. I cannot imagine a life without light.

MALUS

You keep this up and your salon stays an imagination.

RAU

I cannot keep this up. No plot of land in Dirty City will ever let me plant myself.

MALUS steps onto a colorful plot of land.

They push aside an adjacent block of concrete to unveil untouched soil.

MALUS

Make your roots at home.

RAU reluctantly plants herself next to MALUS.

RAU

(Relaxing)

*Im lang. (translation: "Shut up")*

MALUS

(Puzzledly)

Make your bed.

A tanning bed rolls out.

RAU

*Shut up.*

MALUS

I wasn't born with lightheartedness. *I chose it.*

## SCENE 2

TAN SALONTRO

The heart of Dirty City lightly transforms into a tanning salon. An Open/Closed sign hangs. It faces "Closed."

RAU

*Im lang. Im lang. Im lang! Im lang!*

MALUS

Imagine Dirty City's first-ever tanning salon's first-ever customer!

RAU

*Im lang. I refuse to imagine you Figs.*

MALUS

I may be a Fig but not a figment of your imagination!

RAU

*Figures...*

MALUS

We may have different figures and feel  
differently for other figures, but we bleed the  
same eukaryotic cells.

RAU

You are crazy to think I'd let your kind use my  
tanning bed. You ain't got shit on you!

MALUS

Wash that mouth out with soap.

RAU

We Cilantros are soap! I mean... Do you have  
bullshit on you?

MALUS

My business adheres to the capital and makes  
profits. So yes. What's your worth?

RAU

*That'd be ten bullshits, please...*

MALUS

*That's a start.*

MALUS hands a manure-laced bill to  
RAU. They lie in the tanning bed  
and close the lid.

The tanning bed does its magic.

1. "TURNOVER (A NEW START)"

RAU

IT'S MY TURN...  
I WAS HANDED A BAD CARD.  
THIS PLACE HAS NO REGARD.  
THEY TREAT ME LIKE I'M FROM SPACE, AFAR.  
I HAVE LEAVES THAT COULDN'T HOLD WATER.  
I WAS GONNA COME APART.  
BUT YOU HAD A HEART?  
I HAVE A NEW START.

MALUS gets out of the tanning bed.  
They inspect themselves.

RAU (CONT'D)

TURN AROUND.

NICE TAN.

MALUS

NOT A FAN.

RAU  
NOTHING FANCY.

MALUS  
YOU WILL SEE THAT FANCY GETS THE FANS.

RAU turns the "Closed" sign to  
"Open."

Crickets chirp.

MALUS (CONT'D)  
Well, I'll try to get my pals en root. You're  
on your own in this soil. It is all your turn  
from here.

MALUS exits.

RAU  
IT'S MY TURN...  
I DON'T DESERVE MY GREEN CARD.  
IT IS NOT THERE TO BE ON GUARD.  
I HAVE LEAVES THAT CAME SO FAR.  
BUT NO TREE, ESPECIALLY ME, CAN REACH THE STARS.  
I DON'T HAVE THE HEART.  
I SHOULD STOP...

RAU sits on the tanning bed. She  
exposes her belly. She pulls out a  
bottle of body oil.

RAU (CONT'D)  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE.

RAU rubs her belly with tanning  
body oil. It gleams with her tan.

Lights move in and out. Support is  
audible.

RAU (CONT'D)  
My body oil? You like this foreign stuff?

Lights are positively responsive.

RAU (CONT'D)  
This ain't from Dirty City. This oil is from my  
dirty ol' village!

RAU sprays body oil about.

Either animated silhouettes or a  
colorful light show demonstrate  
that business is booming with  
patrons coming in and out.



Financial quarters roll by with  
the rising and setting Sun.

RAU (CONT'D)

TURNOVER!  
THE WORLD IS NOT OVER.  
WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND.

TURN AROUND!  
I NOW HAVE A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE.  
AFTER GOING THROUGH WHAT I CAN KINDLY PUT: AN ADVENTURE.

I'VE SHED EUKARYOTIC CELLS.  
NO ONE CARED WHAT I HAD TO SELL.  
I WAS STUCK IN THE GREEN CARD PRISON.  
THE ONLY LIGHT THROUGH THE BAR WAS OUR SUN.

I'VE MADE MY BED, BUT NOW I CAN FLIP IT AROUND TO THE COOLER  
SIDE!

TURNOVER!  
TURN AROUND!

Several tanning beds roll out.

Bullshit rains down on RAU.

MALUS steps in.

RAU (CONT'D)  
(Deceptively)  
THIS IS THE START OF A FLORAL  
FRIENDSHIP.

MALUS  
(Doubtfully)  
THIS IS THE START OF AN  
HERBAL FRIENDSHIP.

MALUS gathers bullshit and leaves  
the rest to RAU. They exit.

RAU turns the "Open" sign to  
"Closed." RAU lies in a tanning  
bed and closes the lid.

RAU (CONT'D)  
BUT THE BEST TURNOVER I EVER HAD...

RAU opens the lid. Her belly is no  
more.

Direct sunlight lands on a  
distinct soiled tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)  
IS MY SUN...

PARSLEY leaps out of the lit  
tanning bed.

End of "TURNOVER (A NEW START)"

RAU (CONT'D)

Turn around...

PARSLEY turns around.

RAU (CONT'D)

You missed a spot. But son, do you shine...

PARSLEY

Mom... Don't embarrass me in front of the sneezeworts!

(to the audience)

Don't ya worry, loyal customers. We'll open up the salon again on the first light of dawn. Now, try not to fight over our complimentary moisturizers!

PARSLEY tosses moisturizers into the audience. He gets to work sterilizing the place.

RAU

Us Cilantros are all about presentation. Parsley Răm is a natural.

### SCENE 3

It is night. Dance music distantly echoes from FigLeaf next door.

RAU uses a tanning bed as a desk to do paperwork and count bullshit.

PARSLEY perches by the window.

PARSLEY

Mom... Who is out at night?

RAU

A light with no sense of direction, son.

PARSLEY

But the sound sure likes going this way.

RAU

Sounds don't feed us.

PARSLEY

A light with no sense of direction... So, there is light. They are just lost.

RAU

The light is artificial. They chose to not follow what is natural.

PARSLEY

But our tanning beds... Its light don't come from the Sun?

RAU

*They* paint skins with UV. It is like if you split the spectrums of sunlight onto a palette.

PARSLEY

What is a spectrum?

RAU

I don't know... But don't ask Malus. Malus—

PARSLEY & RAU

Has malice intent.

PARSLEY

I know... But they—

RAU

He and his customers pay our rent. His bullshit is unnatural.

PARSLEY

Artificial is artful. I'm down with it.

RAU

*Artificial is awful.* You sound high.

PARSLEY

Nothing is blunt as you, Mom.

RAU

No one I need to be more direct with than you, Son.

## 2. "A NATURAL"

RAU

NATURE...  
NURTURED FROM THE LIGHT OF OUR SUN.  
IT'S NATURAL.

PARSLEY nears RAU.

RAU (CONT'D)

PLANTING THEIR HOT FEET ON OUR GROUND.  
THEY'RE NATURAL.  
BUT IT'S NOT AS WARM AS A MOM'S HUG.

RAU hugs PARSLEY.

RAU (CONT'D)

COMES NATURAL.  
WHAT'S NOT? THAT WOULD BE THE TICKLES!

RAU tickles PARSLEY.

Parsley eventually gets up, gets  
Tan Salontro ready for the  
morning, and gets ready for bed.

RAU (CONT'D)  
(Repeatedly)

A NATURAL.

(Eventually)

SON. YOU ARE A... NATURAL!

End of "A NATURAL"

A blanket plops out of the soiled  
tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)  
Your planter is made. Now go lie in it.

PARSLEY lies in bed.

PARSLEY  
*I am a natural at lying.*

RAU tucks PARSLEY into bed.

RAU  
You speak the truth, Parsley. Ngu ngon, my Sun.

RAU exits.

#### **SCENE 4**

The morning light returns.

MALUS, fully clothed, steps into  
the sunrise this time.

MALUS  
Cow, Parsley.

PARSLEY leaps out of bed and turns  
the "Closed" sign to "Open."

PARSLEY  
*Chào. Ya Crabapple sure always sweet, but ya  
can never sweeten your pronunciations?*

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)  
No malice.

MALUS  
Yes, Pyrus!

PARSLEY

Pyrus?

MALUS

My nibbling.

PARSLEY

Another Crabapple?

MALUS

Another one in town.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

And I wanna get out of this Dirty City.

PARSLEY

Doing our city dirty, huh?

(Genuinely)

You'll fit in real well.

MALUS

Tanning beds come in all shapes and sizes.  
There are all sorts of tanning beds. There will  
be one that matches your body.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

I don't want nobody to see me around you. Let's  
go back to FigLeaf!

PARSLEY

I always wanna go to FigLeaf.

MALUS

Now now, you may have the spirit of a Fig. But  
only adult plants are allowed at nightclubs.  
*And, your mother would lose her freakin'*  
*aldehyde.*

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Would you mind if we go shopping after? You  
said we would visit Cantaloupe Outlets!

MALUS

You will never find me amongst those hipsters.  
How about a trip to Celery Mall?

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

But you said we could go where I wanted! You're  
more of an Apple Blossom than a Crabapple.  
Celery Mall only sells to house-old plants.

MALUS

Take that back!

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Per FigLeaf's policy: No returns. No, Malus.

PARSLEY

Pyrus. How often are you burnt by Malus?

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Never as much as our Sun.

PYRUS walks in, with sunburns.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

I wanted a good tan...

MALUS

And you can get it here.

PYRUS

But I wanted to get it naturally.

MALUS

We're not the only ones susceptible to sunburns. The Cherrys and Maples are, too.

PARSLEY

Our tanning beds can be set at any level that is comfortable with you.

MALUS

See, Parsley. Always level-headed.

PYRUS looks down at PARSLEY.

PYRUS

I'm gonna level with ya Cilantros. You can spice up my skin, but it won't spice up my life.

(to MALUS)

*Don't look at me...* I'll meet you back at FigLeaf.

MALUS

You seedlings enjoy yourselves!

MALUS exits.

PYRUS

I ain't no seedling anymore!

(to PARSLEY)

Do your thing, little herb.

PARSLEY leads PYRUS by tanning beds around the Tan Salontro.

PARSLEY

Which thing?

PYRUS

No more small talk. Not even from a little herb such as yourself.

PARSLEY

I mean, which tanning bed? Low or high pressure?

PYRUS

No pressure at all.

PARSLEY

Why would you want that? Pressure is fun.

PYRUS

You can say that as a kid.

PARSLEY

I do many things as a kid.

PYRUS

You're not stuck watching plants change colors everyday?

PARSLEY

Well, there's mudwrestling and singing in the rain. Since school's out, there are different things to do. Where do you go to school?

PYRUS

Tetra High Center of Learning.

PARSLEY

I've heard about THC. A high school rich enough to not have a resource officer.

PYRUS

Yeah. But, it doesn't stop other flowers from being fashion polices.

PARSLEY

And I'm here to police only your membrane.

PYRUS

They police that, too. They get under my membrane.

PARSLEY

Under?

PYRUS

They go beyond the outer body shaming. Their thorns reach my core. My nucleus. The one thing I am.

PARSLEY

Why don't you have two things?

PYRUS

Wait. Back up.

PARSLEY

Why don't you have a backup nucleus...?

PYRUS

What are you implying?

PARSLEY

Be brave and um...

PYRUS

You be brave and spit it out.

3. "GROW A PAIR"

PYRUS sings about their treatment by the other flowers.  
PARSLEY tries to soothe PYRUS. PYRUS appreciates PARSLEY.



YOU ARE A PAIR.                      PARSLEY

WE'D MAKE A GREAT PAIR.                      PYRUS

End of "GROW A PAIR"

PYRUS pulls out a glass bottle.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

Let's test our water.

PARSLEY distances.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

It's only fifteen percent...

PARSLEY

I can't drink that.

PYRUS

Why not?

PARSLEY

I'm not old enough.

PYRUS

And so am I. But I'm fine. *I feel old enough.*  
And I'm like only a few years older than you.  
Besides, this is worth 72 bullshits. You're old  
enough to count that high, right?

PARSLEY

You don't need to spew much. Look, it's on me.  
If you feel bad about it, I'll take a few bull.

PYRUS

Nah, I need to save every bullshit I can, so I  
can finally cut off my carbon-dated parents.

Yeah, you heard me say my experience with the  
flowers at school. Now imagine that but 72  
times that at home.

Just a sip. You'll feel right at home.

PYRUS opens the bottle.

PARSLEY takes a sip. He spits some  
of it out.

PARSLEY

It's a miracle that I got any left in my mouth.

PYRUS

That's the name of the liqueur: Miracle! Well,  
I'll let you and one of your new friends be.

PARSLEY

Friends?

PYRUS

Miracle and I, silly herb! And now that we're friends, friends go shoppin' together!

PARSLEY

Can Miracle come along?

PYRUS

*Miracle needs to stay a no-show or we'll be shown the door by the po-po. Don't start poop!*

PYRUS exits.

#### 4. "TEST THE WATER"

PARSLEY enters a newfound state that is akin to being introduced to alcohol for the first time.

PARSLEY

(Repeatedly)

Glucose is clear...

PARSLEY passes out.

#### End of "TEST THE WATER"

### SCENE 5

RAU enters. She towers over PARSLEY.

RAU

Parsley... Sleeping on the job? I'm going to garnish your wages.

PARSLEY

You're gonna make my allowance fabulous?

RAU

(Amusedly)

*No... Though, the joke is a garnish in itself. You've worked hard.*

PARSLEY

I hardly play. I'd like a vacation.

RAU

Where would you like to go?

PARSLEY

Cantaloupe Outlets.

RAU

An American shopping center? Well, we can stop by after grabbing some ingredients at the Vietnamese supermarket.

PARSLEY

You like the butcher?

RAU

Someone's gotta split water into oxygen. Besides, he and I are just old friends.

PARSLEY

I made a new friend...

RAU

A classmate from Ivy League Junior High? Son, you're finally making friends! Name?

PARSLEY

Pyrus.

RAU

A relative of Malus...?

PARSLEY

You actually listen to Malus's spiels?

RAU

Yes. Even the unnatural can sound appealing. How did you two meet? Isn't Pyrus *not from here*?

PARSLEY

They are in town. One of the first things Malus introduced them to was our salon.

RAU

Did *they* try out our tanning bed? Ooh, which one?

PARSLEY

All of them.

RAU

Wow. In town for a day and already our number one customer.

PARSLEY

Yes. And I wanna get to know our number one customer at the business of all business: Cantaloupe Outlet.

RAU

What are you two going to do there?

PARSLEY

We're gonna go see "Popcorn."

RAU

Oh no. That movie is for adults. And besides, I don't need you to have nightmares about what heat does to corn. It's not a pretty sight.

PARSLEY

*There's no kernel of truth in what you said.*

RAU hands bullshit to PARSLEY.

RAU

Here's twenty bullshit to see Veggie Tales.

PARSLEY

*God...*

RAU

Godspeed with Pyrus. Now, go get yourself ready as a plum.

PARSLEY gets in a hugh tanning bed and closes it.

The tanning bed tilts up and transforms into a photo booth.

## SCENE 6

CANTALOUPE OUTLETS

Clothing racks scatter about.

PARSLEY and PYRUS stand inside the photo booth.

## 5. "PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

PARSLEY & PYRUS

(Repeatedly)

$6\text{CO}_2 + 6\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 + 6\text{O}_2$

A photo collage prints out of the photo booth.

## End of "PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

PARSLEY and PYRUS exit the photo booth. They hold film merch.

PYRUS

Good thing "Rotten Tomatoes" is for teens. I'd certify that it is *freshhh*.

PARSLEY

Well, I'd mark it down for the scene where  
despite the kids' fruits of labor they ended up  
diced tomatoes.

PYRUS

Who knew tomatoes can be such squares, *like*  
*you?*

PYRUS bumps into a clothing rack.  
They are fixated on the clothing  
aisle.

PARSLEY appears bewildered. He  
walks about until a floral crop  
top catches his eyes.

PARSLEY

Huh?

PYRUS

Are you a square, Parsley?

PARSLEY

No...

PYRUS

Just checking. Boobs come in all shapes and  
sizes. Go ahead, little herb. Try it on.

PARSLEY

Aren't these for...?

PYRUS

They're not just for flowers like me. I wear  
one and you wear one. Can you top mine?

## 6. "CROP TOP"

PYRUS

DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ON TOP OF THE WORLD?  
TOP OF THE CROP!

End of "CROP TOP"