

TURNOVER: A NEW LEAF

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 ("Direct Sunlight"). Parsley is curious about the nightlife ("A Natural"). Malus soon introduces them 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 go shopping ("Glucose is Clear").

Parsley asks Rau for permission. She reluctantly lets Parsley go ("Propagation"). At Cantaloupe Outlets, Parsley and Pyrus pose in a photo booth ("Photosynthesis"). Pyrus takes him to a clothing area. He discovers a liking for different floral styles, especially crop tops ("Crop Top"). Elsewhere, Rau picks a fight with Malus due to Parsley's sudden sense of freedom ("Test the Water"). A coming-of-age series of adventures happen amongst Parsley and Pyrus ("Spray Date").

Rau finds Parsley's stashed clothing abhorrent and grounds them ("Soiled"). Parsley ponders ("Fertile"). Pyrus helps Parsley sneak out ("Worm 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 ("Miracle"). 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. "Direct Sunlight" Rau, Parsley
3. "A Natural" Parsley
4. "Grow a Pair" Pyrus, Parsley
5. "Glucose is Clear" Parsley
6. "Propagation" Rau, Parsley
7. "Photosynthesis" Parsley, Pyrus
8. "Crop Top" Pyrus, Parsley
9. "Spray Date" Parsley, Pyrus
10. "Test the Water" Malus, Rau
11. "Soiled (The Family Name)" Rau, Parsley
12. "Fertile" Parsley
13. "Worm Out" Pyrus, Parsley
14. "Dirt on You (Your Botany Brings the Dirt to the Yard)" Pyrus, Parsley
15. "Miracle" Rau
16. "Sterilize" Pyrus, Parsley
17. "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.

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.

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 get in the tanning bed.

1. "TURNOVER (A NEW START)" (<https://www.turnovershow.com/music/1-turnover>)

The tanning bed does its magic.

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

RAU

TURN AROUND.

NICE TAN.

MALUS

NOT A FAN.

RAU

NOTHING FANCY.

MALUS

YOU WILL SEE THAT FANCY GETS THE FANS.

RAU's business fails at first then suddenly picks up due to an incident that leads to her unveiling her gleaming body oil (still brainstorming).

Either animated silhouettes or an ensemble of FIGLEAFS demonstrate that business is booming.

Several tanning beds roll out.

Bullshit rains down on RAU.

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

RAU
BUT THE BEST TURNOVER I EVER HAD...

RAU opens the lid. Her belly is no
more.

Direct sunlight lands on the
distinct soiled tanning bed.

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

PARSLEY jumps 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
flowers!

(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
echo.

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

PARSLEY perches by the window.

PARSLEY

Mom... What 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 paints 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 pays our rent. His bullshit is unnatural.

PARSLEY

Artificial is artful. I'm down with it.

RAU

Artificial is awful. Are you high?

PARSLEY

Nothing is blunt as you, Mom.

RAU

Nothing is direct as the Sun.

RAU heads to PARSLEY's side.

2. "DIRECT SUNLIGHT" (https://www.turnovershow.com/music/2-direct_sunlight)

RAU sings a lullaby to PARSLEY. The themes are wellbeing, mortality, and what is truth.

RAU
SON. YOU ARE A NATURAL.

End of "DIRECT SUNLIGHT"

A blanket plops out of the soiled tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)
I made your planter. Now go lie in it.

PARSLEY lies in bed.

PARSLEY
I am a natural.

RAU tucks PARSLEY into bed.

RAU
You speak the truth, Parsley. Good day. Ngu ngon, my little Răm.

RAU exits.

3. "A NATURAL" (https://www.turnovershow.com/music/3-a_natural)

PARSLEY sings his "I Want" song. He wants to be a natural. This song should be composed in the key of A.

The morning light returns.

End of "A NATURAL"

SCENE 4

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

MALUS enters.

MALUS
Cow, Parsley.

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 really well.

MALUS

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 with 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)

No Malus.

PARSLEY

Pyrus. How often are you burnt by Malus?

PYRUS

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.

4. "GROW A PAIR" (https://www.turnovershow.com/music/4-grow_a_pair)

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

PYRUS pulls out a glass bottle.

PYRUS
TEST OUR WATER.

End of "GROW A PAIR"

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 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 that 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
What 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 Cilantro! 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 shit!

PYRUS exits.

5. "GLOCUSE IS CLEAR" (https://www.turnovershow.com/music/5-glocuse_is_clear)

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

PARSLEY passes out.

End of "GLOCUSE IS CLEAR"

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
I'd like to go by myself...

6. "PROPAGATION" (<https://www.turnovershow.com/music/6-propagation>)

RAU reluctantly lets PARSLEY hang out with his new friend, PYRUS. RAU tells PARSLEY not to get new (gay) ideas in his head through propagation.

End of "PROPAGATION"

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.

7. "PHOTOSYNTHESIS" (<https://www.turnovershow.com/music/7-photosynthesis>)

PARSLEY and PYRUS sing a short jingle and play on the word "photo" in photosynthesis.

A photo collage prints out of the photo booth.

End of "PHOTOSYNTHESIS"

PARSLEY and PYRUS exit the photo booth.

PYRUS rushes to a clothing rack.

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

8. "CROP" (<https://www.turnovershow.com/music/8-crop>)

This is gonna be an epic pop song about crop tops.

End of "CROP"