

TURNOVER: A NEW LEAF

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A Floral-Herbal Musical

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## PLOT SUMMARY

TURNOVER: A NEW LEAF is an herbal fable about an openly queer family turning a neighboring Vietnamese family's life around.

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 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 ("Move the Plot Forward").

This teen operates the day-to-day business of Tan Salontro and spends the nights with his mom ("A Natural"). At the start of the summer, Malus introduces Parsley to their teenage nibbling Pyrus. Parsley helps Pyrus with issues 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 then takes him clothes shopping. He discovers a liking for different floral styles, especially crop tops ("Crop Top"). Nearby, Rau picks a fight with Malus over finances. They soon bump into Parsley and Pyrus. Rau's world turns upside down when she sees Parsley's crop top. Malus explains Rau's prejudice to Pyrus ("Soiled").

Parsley is grounded ("Fertile"). Soon, Pyrus helps Parsley sneak out. With their guest DJ Cauliflower, 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 blackouts and ends up in the hospital, getting his stoma pumped.

Rau sees the light of her ways with Malus. Rau feels that she earned her green card and that Malus's "lifestyle" is as natural as the greens around ("Green Card"). FigLeaf shuts down due to the violation of underage drinking laws. Pyrus visits Parsley, letting him know that they are preparing to go back to school ("Sterilize"). Rau offers Pyrus a summer job if they ever are around again. After all, it is a family business ("Turnover").

TURNOVER plants queer themes from family dynamics, body image, business relations with its pseudo-allyship, and the duality between nature versus nurture. There are turnovers between this sunny salon and night saloon with a herbal seedling's phase from day to night being 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. "Move the Plot Forward" Malus, Rau
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, Pyrus
9. "Dirt on You" DJ Cauliflower, Pyrus, Parsley
10. "Green Card" Rau, Malus
11. "Sterilize" Pyrus, Parsley
12. "Turnover (A New Leaf)" Parsley, Rau, Pyrus, Malus
- \_. "Amount to Anything" Pyrus

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

Figment 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. Your kind of accent is not like a brussels sprout. It sounds like 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. I moved this far for what? I move... what?

1. "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"

MALUS  
(Repeating)  
MOVE THE PLOT...  
FORWARD...

MALUS steps onto a colorful plot of land. They push aside an adjacent block of concrete to unveil untouched soil.

MALUS (CONT'D)  
MAKE YOUR ROOTS AT HOME.

RAU  
THIS IS YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD?

MALUS  
*ROOT FOR ME...*

RAU  
*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 HAVE CHOSEN IT!*

NOW YOU CHOOSE:  
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU  
OR...?

MALUS  
LOSE THE PLOT BACKWARD...  
(Repeating)  
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...  
LOSE THE PLOT BACKWARD...

RAU reluctantly plants herself next to MALUS.

RAU  
OH...

RAU & MALUS  
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU  
FORWARD!

SCENE 2

TAN SALONTRO

The tanning salon moves forward,  
lightly transforming the heart of  
Dirty City. 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.

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. Positive whispers are 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'VE 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 "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"

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 taxes 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

There is 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.  
He opens a tanning bed and plants  
a blanket in it.

RAU (CONT'D)

(Repeatedly)

A NATURAL.

(Eventually)

SON. YOU ARE A... NATURAL!

End of "A NATURAL"

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*  
(*translation: sleep well*), 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 among 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 around the tanning beds in 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. And weed out the troubles in your brain.

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

Hold up. 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"

PARSLEY

YOU ARE NOT BEYOND REPAIR.  
YOU DO NOT NEED TO CARE.



YOUR EYES SHOULD STARE.  
 YOUR SMILE SHALL SCARE.  
 YOUR MATES CAN'T COMPARE.  
 YOU NEED TO GROW A PAIR.

PYRUS  
 I NEED TO SUNNILY PREPARE.  
 I LIVE IN A WORLD THAT'S NOT FAIR.  
 MY SKIN WILL JUST FLAIR.  
 MY NERVES WILL GO MEDIUM RARE.  
 MY "FRIENDS" WILL COMPARE.  
 I CANNOT GROW A PAIR.

PARSLEY stops at a tanning bed.

PARSLEY  
 HERE IS YOUR LAIR.  
 PRESSURE IS NOWHERE.  
 A BADGE OF HONOR IS WHAT YOU'LL WEAR.  
 IT WILL BE OKAY, I SWEAR.  
 THAT A GOOD MEMORY YOU'LL SHARE.  
 YOU'RE GONNA GROW A PAIR.

The tanning bed is ready for  
 PYRUS.

PYRUS gets in the tanning bed and  
 closes it.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)  
 (Repeatedly)  
 IT'S IN THERE.

PYRUS  
 (Repeatedly)  
 GROW A PAIR...

PYRUS leaps out.

PYRUS (CONT'D)  
 I AM NOT BEYOND REPAIR.  
 I DO NOT NEED TO CARE.  
 MY EYES SHOULD STARE.  
 MY SMILE SHALL SCARE.  
 MY MATES CAN'T COMPARE.  
 I HAVE TO GROW A PAIR.

PYRUS gets in another tanning bed  
 and closes it.

PARSLEY  
 DON'T WEAR IT OUT.

Pyrus tries all the tanning beds.  
They increasingly resemble a pear.  
They eventually head to PARSLEY's  
side.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)  
YOU'RE LIKE A PEAR.

PYRUS  
WE'D MAKE A GREAT PAIR.

End of "GROW A PAIR"

PYRUS pulls out a glass bottle.

PYRUS (CONT'D)  
Let's test our water.

PARSLEY distances from PYRUS.

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 ain't 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?

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.  
You've heard 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 takes the bottle from PARSLEY. They exit.

#### 4. "TEST THE WATER"

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

The lake forms. The tides rise.

PARSLEY wobbles. They stay put and yet also journey to far-off lands. They break in their sea legs.

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 Outlets.

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 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"**

[Summary: This is the most educational musical number of the

musical. This will teach about the process of photosynthesis while playing on the prefix photo-. This is akin to a song from Pham's musical ELLIPSES titled "[Time is Relative.](#)"

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 was *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. He holds the crop top like a talisman.

PARSLEY

Huh?

PYRUS

Are you a square, Parsley?

PARSLEY

No...

PYRUS

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

PARSLEY

Aren't these for...?

PYRUS

They're not just for flowers like me. But these would be perfect this weekend's rave!

PARSLEY

What's a rave?

PYRUS

It's like a party where rotten tomatoes are not invited, giving it bad views.

PARSLEY

I wanna go!

PYRUS

I don't think you can, little herb.

PARSLEY

You're not so big either.

PYRUS

Well, the music is going to be for little big flowers like me. We have a famous guest DJing.

PARSLEY

What's their name?

PYRUS

It's a secret. But the DJ certainly loves shouting their name at the top of their stomata to start a song.

PARSLEY

Pyrussss. Is this half shirt the key to being allowed in?!

PYRUS

Only if you top mine!

## 6. "CROP TOP"

PYRUS wears a crop top.

PYRUS

(Repeating)

NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN.

PICK A PATTERN.

PARSLEY eventually picks a shirt.

PYRUS snatch the shirt from PARSLEY. They toss the shirt away.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

NO NO. RETURN!

THE CREAM OF THE CROP THAT IS FASHION.  
NO SHIRT CAN EVER TOP THIS!

PARSLEY  
A CROP TOP...?

PYRUS tries on various crop tops.

PYRUS  
WHERE TO FIND ONE THAT FITS?  
WEAR ONE THAT SUITS YOUR PERSONALITY.

PYRUS's belly flops out of a crop top.

PARSLEY  
THERE GOES YOUR BELLY.

PYRUS puts a crop top on PARSLEY.

PYRUS  
YOU CANNOT BE STOPPED WHEN YOU PUT YOURSELF IN THIS CROP TOP!

PYRUS puts on a crop top. They hold grab another crop top.

PARSLEY  
(Adapting)  
IT FEELS SO WARM YET SO COOL...

PYRUS  
IT CUTS TO YOUR HEART'S BOTTOM.  
IT HAS YOU FEELING ON TOP!

PARSLEY dances a crop circle. They are rocking the crop top.

PYRUS (CONT'D)  
YOU CANNOT BE STOPPED WHEN YOU'RE DANCING IN ROCKING CROP TOPS!

PARSLEY snatches the crop top from PYRUS's Hand.

PARSLEY  
I TOP YOURS!

PYRUS  
YOU BOTTOM FEEDER!

PARSLEY  
I'M ON TOP!

PYRUS  
I'LL CROP YOU!



PYRUS chases PARSLEY around,  
displaying an allegory of what it  
means to crop tops off in life.

PARSLEY spreads moisturizer on one  
end of the crop top.

PYRUS nabs the moisturized end of  
the crop top and do a tug-of-war  
until PYRUS slips their grasp and  
it is securely in PARSLEY's hand.

PYRUS (CONT'D)  
YOU'RE THE TOP OF THE CROP TO TOP IT ALL OFF!

PARSLEY  
(Blushingly)  
NO ONE PULLS THEM OFF LIKE ME...

PARSLEY & PYRUS  
CROP TOPS!

End of "CROP TOP"

MALUS marches in from the other  
side of Cantaloupe Outlet.

RAU tails MALUS.

RAU  
You cropped my profits!

MALUS  
*Oh, the humidity.* I ain't done nothing! I don't  
know what you mean. Besides, you've only lost  
track of 72 bullshits, which is negligible if  
you calculated the mean of yesterday's gross  
revenue.

RAU  
But I cannot predict the maintenance that will  
go into my tanning beds. 72 bullshits was a lot  
of use for one of your people. It's not any  
FigLeaf patron. It's not you specially. It is  
one of your species.

MALUS  
My Pyrus?

RAU  
They tanned and dashed.

MALUS  
I loaned- I mean gave them enough to cover  
seven appointments? You sure your Parsley  
didn't stash the bullshit?

RAU

How could you frame my son?

MALUS

Picture this: They're a teenager now, growing into adulthood, and their top priority is bullshit. Like all teenagers!

RAU notices PARSLEY and PYRUS. She heads towards them.

RAU

Im lang. I'm gonna crop your top off!

PARSLEY

(Vietnamese)

*Me?! (translation: "Mom")*

RAU

The plants around this outlet are watching a Cilantro make a scene. Pull it off now!

MALUS

You're the Cilantro always making a scene, Rau.

(Complimentary)

You're pulling off that crop top, Parsley.

PYRUS

This little herb could not be more on top of the world. His plot is where it needs to go.

RAU

(to PYRUS)

Im lang, *đồ vô học* (translation: *uneducated person*)!

MALUS

Parsley, what did your mom say? I've never heard this insult before.

PYRUS nods to PARSLEY.

PARSLEY

(Vietnamese)

*Me... ("Mom") You're the ignorant one. Con đĩ!*  
(translation: *"Bitch"*)

MALUS

(to RAU)

Not only did you moisturize your skin, but your mouth too. Cause your mouth be foaming!

PYRUS

(Laughing)

Whatever you said. I can't believe you said it. You, son of a bitch...

RAU  
(Heartbroken)

*Thang chó đê... (translation: "Son of a bitch")*  
End this scenery at once

RAU drags PARSLEY away from PYRUS  
and MALUS.

### SCENE 7

RAU (CONT'D)  
You are so grounded, *anh thanh niên!*  
(translation: "Young man")

PARSLEY  
Young man... Thank you for the validation, mom.  
Young men cannot be grounded! I am no longer a  
seedling.

### 7. "SOILED (THE FAMILY NAME)"

[Summary: RAU is disappointed in PARSLEY for accepting Pyrus  
while MALUS is proud of PYRUS for pissing off the tiger mom.]

MALUS lets PYRUS keep the crop top. They exit.

PARSLEY crawls into a department store's tanning salon.

RAU

And now you're soiling the family business by going to other businesses.

PARSLEY

Mind your own business!

RAU

My business is that you're grounded!

RAU exits.

The department store transforms into Tan Salontro.

End of "SOILED (THE FAMILY NAME)"

### SCENE 8

TAN SALONTRO

8. "FERTILE"

A tanning bed holds a soiled blanket.

PARSLEY pops out from underneath the blanket. They look at a photo of RAU.

PARSLEY

YOU DEFER MY SMILE.

YOUNG MAN...

I AM NOT A CHILD.

I AM MORE WILD.

I AM FERTILE.

IT'S FUTILE...

PYRUS appears at the window.

PYRUS  
RECONCILE!

PARSLEY  
MY MOM WILL GET RILED-

PYRUS pulls out the crop top.

PYRUS  
WEAR THIS CROP TOP BEFORE IT GOES OUT OF STYLE.

PARSLEY wears the crop top.

PARSLEY  
THIS IS MY TRIAL!

PYRUS  
LET'S GET WILD!

PARSLEY writes on bullshit.

PARSLEY  
(Writing)  
YOU WON'T LIKE ME AT MY VOLATILE.  
FROM YOURS, A FERTILE.

PARSLEY climbs out of the window.

End of "FERTILE"

## SCENE 9

FIGLEAF

PARSLEY and PYRUS lands on the  
dirt.

DJ CAULIFLOWER  
We got a Cilantro in the yard!

PARSLEY  
And you are?

DJ CAULIFLOWER  
A Cauliflower. The Cauliflower. DJ...

DJ CAULIFLOWER holds a microphone  
towards the AUDIENCE.

DJ CAULIFLOWER (CONT'D)

What are you all, houseplants? We gotta act  
like weeds all up in this cement. Me, I'm a  
godsend...

9. "DIRT ON YOU"

DJ CAULIFLOWER

DJ CAULIFLOWERRRR!

I GOT DA DA DA DIRT ON YOU.

DA DA DA DIRT ON YOU.

ROOT FOR ME.

WATER ME.

WATER ME. WATER ME.

PYRUS hands liqueur to PARSLEY.

PARSLEY incrementally drinks.

The lake forms. The tides rise.

DJ CAULIFLOWER (CONT'D)

WHAT ARE WE?

PYRUS

Dirty!

DJ CAULIFLOWER

DIRTY, BABY...

GIVE ME THAT MOTHERFUCKING BULLSHIT!

PYRUS tosses bills at DJ  
CAULIFLOWER.

PARSLEY

Mother... Bullshit fucked over my mom!

PYRUS

We also are fucking over every adult in this  
Dirty City!

PARSLEY

I see... Dirty.

PYRUS

Dirty City... Where you live? Are you drunk?

PARSLEY

I never felt so alive!

Sunshine reigns.

DJ CAULIFLOWER

That little herb is on their own little island!

Rainstorms brew. The stormy ocean  
descends. A lighthouse appears.

PYRUS gets washed away.

PARSLEY has broken sea legs.

PARSLEY

Can a plant... Can a plant drown...?

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)

Parsley! Parsley!

The lighthouse turns into  
ambulance lights.

PYRUS swims to PARSLEY.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

There's dirt on you...

PYRUS drags away PARSLEY.

End of "DIRT ON YOU"

#### **SCENE 10**

RAU drags in MALUS. She slaps  
MALUS across the face. She needs  
to say something but cannot find  
the words.

MALUS

Thang chó đê...? That's what I am.

RAU

I'm the bitch here. Where was my son?

MALUS

Fortunately not in the sky like that sun...

RAU hands MALUS some money.

MALUS (CONT'D)

What's this?

RAU

For all the drinks that Parsley didn't pay for.

MALUS

This is some bullshit.

RAU

Don't put it on the house-

MALUS

There won't be a house. Dirty City is shutting us down. They got the proof. In the liqueur. Pumping out of your seedling's stoma. Underage drinking... I should have been there to card your kid.

RAU

I'm sorry to hear that. It's not just my kid who still needs to grow up and face the consequences.

MALUS

They were right all along... It would be immigrants who'd take my job away...

RAU

That is your problem.

MALUS

The problem is not that Parsley did not earn their adult card.

RAU

It is what, huh?

MALUS

It is that you never deserved your card.

#### 10. "GREEN CARD"

[Definition: an identity document which shows that a person has permanent residency in the country]

Summary: Both RAU and MALUS earn their green card, respectively in residency and respectfully as a natural-born queer green plant.]

RAU

I AGREE...

I PLANTED HERE AS A NONCITIZEN.

BUT ANYWHERE, I AM A REAL PLANT.  
THAT IS MY GREEN CARD.



MALUS

You took away my rights.

RAU

You almost took my son's life.

MALUS

You took away my livelihood.

RAU

Have you ever lived in the hood of the woods?

MALUS

What does my privilege have to do with anything?

RAU

You can start over.

MALUS

The queer community I built?!

RAU

It carries over. The love.

MALUS

I thought...

RAU

You can always hide it underneath your soil.  
And wait to reveal yourself when the light is right.

MALUS

When did you get wise?

RAU

When my baby gets dumb.

MALUS

When did you see the light?

RAU

When my kid played at night.

MALUS

When are you okay with his "disorder?"

RAU

I don't know. What is order? When I see to it that one's disorder is another's order.

MALUS

Your mind is disordered, but your heart is trying to find its focus.

RAU

Have I earned my green card?

MALUS

That's not for us geezers to decide.

RAU

That's for the...

RAU & MALUS

Future generation of seedlings.

MALUS floats off.

End of "GREEN CARD"

# SCENE 11

TAN SALONTRO

RAU remains planted in the space.

Business is dead. The place is an allegory for a dead houseplant.

Rau looks inside the cash register. They pull only a single bill inside.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

Can I turn the sign to "open?"

RAU  
I'm open for business. You are not.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)  
*Me (Mom)...*

RAU  
*Me as in meh or me?*

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)  
Vietnamese words are funny.

RAU  
Especially Vietnamese plants.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)  
Mostly the Cilantros's musical taste.

RAU  
Hey. Wash that mouth out with soap.

PARSLEY enters with soap.

PARSLEY  
(to the AUDIENCE)  
Raise your hand if you think we taste like soap?

If an audience member raises their hand, PARSLEY throws the soap at them.

PARSLEY (CONT'D)  
This is your next meal. Let me know if we really taste like that.

RAU  
You talking to nobody and wasting our soap does not make a good case for you being not sick.

PYRUS (OFFSTAGE)  
And I have bad case ahead of me.

PYRUS enters. Their skin holds minor burns.

RAU  
Pyrus... In the flesh.

PYRUS  
I certainly don't look fresh, Ms. Răm.

RAU  
Summer's coming to an end. But there's light at the end of the tunnel as you return to school.

PYRUS

I need school, so I don't end up being called a "đo vô hoc" again (*translation: an uneducated person*).

PARSLEY

Me, you're the one who needs to be educated.

RAU nods in agreement.

PYRUS

Enlighten me.

RAU

There is more to darkness than meets the eyes.

PYRUS

FigLeaf was the light in the nightlife.

RAU

I'm sorry that your uncle has to start over.

PYRUS

I'm glad he helped you get started. It's your turn to give Malus the tips.

RAU gives PYRUS the single bill.

RAU

I'll give you one: to my son, say good-

PYRUS

Goodbye. I know.

Beat.

PYRUS (CONT'D)

Good riddance?

RAU

I don't know. Just say good things to him...

# 11. "STERILIZE"

[Definition: to make something free from bacteria or other living microorganisms. Definition: to deprive a person or animal of the ability to produce offspring, typically by removing or blocking the sex organs.]

Summary: PYRUS gives a former apology to PARSLEY and RAU. PYRUS equates themselves to a disease. They are also grateful for the good times, good tan, and good body positivity that PARSLEY shared.]

PYRUS

LITTLE HERB, AS I STARED INTO YOUR EYES...  
I HOPE YOU REALIZE...

End of "STERALIZE"

RAU

Meet sure you grab a tax form on your way out!

PYRUS

Taxes?

RAU

If you have to pay the government bullshit to  
work.

PYRUS

You're referring to adulthood.

RAU

You're experienced enough to intern. And that bullshit you pocketed is your first paycheck.

PARSLEY

You're welcome back any time!

PARSLEY hugs PYRUS.

RAU

There's a plot of land for you here.

RAU opens a colorful tanning bed  
for PYRUS.

12. "TURNOVER (A NEW LEAF)"

PYRUS

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 another tanning  
bed. They inspect themselves.

RAU

TURN AROUND.

NICE TAN.

MALUS

BIGGEST FAN.

RAU

NOTHING FANCY.

MALUS

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...

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.

PARSLEY

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!

Water rains down.

PARSLEY & RAU	PYRUS & MALUS
THIS IS THE START OF A FLORAL	THIS IS THE START OF AN
FRIENDSHIP.	HERBAL FRIENDSHIP.

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

PARSLEY, RAU, MALUS, PYRUS, DJ  
BUT THE BEST TURNOVER WE'VE EVER HAD...

A tanning bed opens.

PARSLEY, RAU, MALUS, PYRUS, DJ (CONT'D)  
IS THE SUN!

End of "TURNOVER (A NEW LEAF)"

**END OF SPACETIME**